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SHARED SOLITUDE: RE-INTEGRATION OF A FRACTURED PSYCHE

A comparative study of the works of Gabriel García Márquez and  
Wilson Harris

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## SYNOPSIS

This thesis provides an analysis of the works of Gabriel García Márquez and Wilson Harris in the cross-cultural context of the Americas, emphasizing the importance of myth as well as history in their attempts to explore the hybridity of post-colonial identity. García Márquez' phrase "la soledad compartida" is interpreted as the process of a spiritual journey in which both writers articulate the quest to re-integrate the fractured American psyche. Historical and political contexts are provided to focus the nature of fragmentation, and insights from the new physics to re-iterate the presence of the 'real world' which continues to inform both writers in their experiments with linguistic and literary conventions. Realism is seen as insufficient for defining the reality of the Americas and a framework of magical realism is offered as a more appropriate context in which to approach both writers. My methodology is cross-cultural and interdisciplinary, referring to a variety of Latin American and Caribbean writers, and drawing on history, myth, psychology, and physics, as well as debates about post-colonialism and postmodernism, to support my argument that Harris and García Márquez present a vision of the world in which there is creative hope for the future.

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#### PREFATORY NOTE

Presentation of this thesis has followed MHRA guidelines in conjunction with the guidelines of the Warwick Graduate School. The following note is intended to clarify some of the conventions used.

Full details of each text are given in the first footnote reference; later references are abbreviated and full details appear in the bibliography. Page numbers are used with extended references to the same text, and with ongoing references to García Márquez' Cien años de soledad and Harris' Carnival, The Infinite Rehearsal and The Four Banks of the River of Space. Harris' trilogy has been collected as The Carnival Trilogy but my references are to the separate Faber and Faber editions. In references to all texts the date of the edition I have used is given, with the original date of publication in square brackets. Where there are multiple places of publication the first named place is listed, except where two separate publishers are in collaboration and then each place is given. Where publishers have changed place of publication over the years, the place on the edition used is indicated. All translators are noted where appropriate; where different parts of a single text have been translated by separate people and at different times the editorial note in that text must be consulted.

Terminology remains a problem for the post-colonial critic and certain categories are inevitably Eurocentric and inadequate. The terms Amerindian, native Indian, and indigenous peoples are used throughout but specific cultures are identified wherever possible. The use of the term 'primitive' is not intended to signify inferiority or simply an 'early' stage of civilization; though this teleological bias may be present in some of the quotations (eg. from Jung and Lévi-Strauss) it should be clear from the context that I am using the term to distinguish

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an alternative cultural framework to that of the modern European. Though Euro-American is written in accordance with the conventions of capitalization, Afro-american is used to signify the focus on the first part of the compound, and consistent with the use of Afro-hispanic. Though the term African American is more generally preferred now, terms such as Afro-Saxon continue to expose the partiality of all such categories. In order to reproduce the accent on initial capitals this typescript makes the accented letter look smaller than the rest; though this is clear with Alvaro, the use of Úrsula may look ambiguous. There are three versions of Harris' 'History Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' and the most recently revised version in Explorations has been used, except where reference is made to extracts not reproduced here in which case the reader is directed to the original Georgetown publication.

The bibliography references all texts and authors that have been cited directly in the thesis, with a division into 'Primary' and 'Secondary' texts. All texts by Harris and García Márquez, including essays and interviews, are listed as 'Primary Texts.' An indication of the wider research, especially in the areas of history, politics, myth and critical theory, is included as 'Secondary Texts.' I would like to signal particularly the work of feminist and post-colonial theorists that have increasingly informed my thinking and supported my commitment to the subject.

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## FOREWORD

This thesis began as an attempt to cross-culturalize the study of Latin American and Caribbean literature in the wider context of the Americas, and by focusing on two key writers from the respective regions to demonstrate how each could be used to provide insights into the other. Recent years have seen a variety of works published that now sustain and extend the area of study. José David Saldivar's The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History (Duke University Press, 1991) and Antonio Benítez-Rojo's The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Condition, translated by James Maraniss (Duke University Press, 1992), for example, reveal a similar focus on hybridity and interdisciplinarity, the latter's use of the new physics as a relevant context in which to approach the literary output of the Americas being particularly relevant to my own. Recent novels such as Lawrence Scott's Witchbroom (Oxford: Heinemann, 1992) and Alfredo Vea Jr.'s La Maravilla (New York: Plume, 1994) reveal Trinidadian and Chicano writers experimenting with, and extending the field of, magical realism, confirming it as an appropriate genre in which to explore the hybridity of consciousness. Michael Bell's recent book on García Márquez, Gabriel Garcia Márquez: Solitude and Solidarity (London: Macmillan, 1993), also goes some way towards reinvesting the importance of solitude as a means to communication and integration, concluding that: 'Márquez' containing narrative, like his fiction at large, shows that solitude may be a necessary condition, and an exemplary form of solidarity." (p.146) It is my hope that critics will continue to respond to opposites as facets of the same reality, to the value of cross-cultural study, and that this thesis will make some contribution to it.

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Introduction: IDENTITY AND ACADEMIC STUDY

Wilson Harris and Gabriel García Márquez are both writers of the Americas. Colonialism has left them a language barrier and academic study uses this barrier to define one a Caribbean, the other a Latin American writer. But the distinction becomes absurd when we remember the geographical proximity of Colombia and Guyana and the native history and legends which they share. Harris uses the term 'Americas' and in Tradition, the Writer and Society explains that: "When I speak of the West Indies I am thinking of overlapping contexts of Central and South America as well."<sup>1</sup> García Márquez defines himself as a Caribbean writer and his early writings reveal a profound identification with, and indeed a championing of, the Caribbean coast of Colombia. Although it has often been remarked that the narratives of Wilson Harris resemble more the 'magical realism' of Latin America than they do a tradition of Caribbean literature, no specific study has been carried out in this area and it is hoped that this thesis will reveal the value of a cross-cultural approach to the wider context of Latin American and Caribbean literature.

It is no longer useful to demarcate the Americas on purely linguistic grounds so that they can easily be slotted into departments of Spanish and English respectively.<sup>2</sup> The sheer body of literature, its variety and complexity, refuses to be an appendix to a European tradition. Autonomous courses in Latin American Studies and Caribbean Studies have done much to counteract Eurocentric strangleholds but they remain the product of linguistic division and tend to stress the historical homogeneity of their own region rather

than the important overlapping contexts of the Americas as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Geographical links, political sympathies, and a shared indigenous past, all destroy narrow linguistic boundaries and create instead a diverse pattern of interconnections within and across the heterogeneous cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean. Only in this context is there a coherent place for a country like Nicaragua whose Spanish-speaking Pacific coast links it with mainland Latin America and the political revolutions of Cuba and Chile, its English-speaking Atlantic coast to the culture of the Caribbean islands, and the myths of its native indigenous past and their continued survival with countries as diverse as Guatemala, Colombia and Guyana.

With its vast hinterland and native population Guyana is very different from the Caribbean islands and must also be seen in its South American context if the work of Guyanese artists is to be fully appreciated. Caribbean artists coming from the islands, where there was no evident lost civilization, faced a real artistic difficulty in their search for origins. Some, like V.S. Naipaul in The Middle Passage,<sup>4</sup> talked of the 'historylessness' of the Caribbean. Others, like Brathwaite,<sup>5</sup> looked back through the traumas of the Middle Passage, to Africa, to challenge the usual colonial view of the Caribbean as an uncreative product of the imperial order. But a painter like Aubrey Williams,<sup>6</sup> coming from Guyana, where he had lived for long periods with the Warrau Indians of the North West District, had a more immediate sense of artistic heritage. His vast canvases resemble the murals of Orozco, Rivera and Tamayo in their boundless energy, recovery of an indigenous consciousness, and belief in creative possibilities.

This is the Guyanese reality into which Wilson Harris plunges and his fiction shares with continental South America certain

geographical conditions and consequent possibilities and mental orientation. In Palace of the Peacock, for instance, the action takes place along a river deep in the Guyanese rainforest and the journey into the interior becomes symbolic of explorations into the human psyche and of experiments with the hidden possibilities of language. This reflects the genuine frontier and hinterland that Guyana shares with other South American countries and which are used to similar effect by novelists like W.H. Hudson in Green Mansions and Alejo Carpentier in Los pasos perdidos. This sense of spaciousness which informs the process of time and the structure of imagery contrasts with novels set on the islands, such as V.S. Naipaul's A House for Mr Biswas (Trinidad) or George Lamming's In the Castle of My Skin (Barbados), where the crowding of place intensifies the characters' lack of freedom and identity.

On the continent, the possibility also exists for other social roles. Whereas fiction from the islands tends to reproduce a clearly demarcated social stratum, like the Calvary Hill community in Lovelace's The Dragon Can't Dance, and where characters work out a way of life in an urban setting, figures like the Guyanese 'pork-knocker' seeking a fortune in the interior or the desperadoes fleeing from coastal society create a much more fluid and ambivalent set of social relations. The map of the continental hinterland often means that these characters exist in precariously surviving outposts and trading communities set at great distances from each other, the bonds between them tenuous, though significant.

Macondo is a similarly isolated outpost until its invasion by the Banana Company and Cien años de soledad shares many of the geographical conditions and mental orientations of Harris' Guyana Quartet. Expeditions through rough terrain are again symbolic of spiritual journeys and the sudden arrival of strangers from unknown

lands disturbs the framework of the place to provoke further inquiry into hidden interiors. But there is also a firm Caribbean identity to García Márquez' fiction which sharply distinguishes it from the work of other Latin American experimentalists such as Borges or Cortázar. The narrator of Cien años speaks in the oral voice of Colombia's Caribbean coast and the language and pretensions of the more Spanish interior are ridiculed in the figure of Fernanda del Carpio. Many of the stories are situated on the coast and even the dictator in El otoño del patriarca can lyrically evoke the beauty of his Caribbean homeland. In his most recent novel, El general en su laberinto, García Márquez retrieves the Caribbean accent and African features of Bolívar from the painters who idealized him as his glories increased, "lavándole la sangre, mitificándolo, hasta que lo implantaron en la memoria oficial con el perfil romano de sus estatuas."<sup>7</sup> But it is the mythical call of the Magdalena and the Caribbean coast itself which seems to energize both El amor en los tiempos del cólera and El general en su laberinto. In his postscript to El general García Márquez reiterates his own personal identification with the Caribbean: "Más que las glorias del personaje me interesaba entonces el río Magdalena, que empecé a conocer de niño, viajando desde la costa caribe, donde tuve la buena suerte de nacer, hasta la ciudad de Bogotá, lejana y turbia, donde me sentí más forastero que en ninguna otra desde la primera vez."<sup>8</sup> Like that of Wilson Harris, García Márquez' Caribbean identity is truly a mestizo identity, a product of the cross-cultural imagination of the Americas, which enables the writer to view reality in a 'different' way. He refers explicitly to this special quality of the Americas in El olor de la guayaba. Describing a visit to Angola as a kind of homecoming, a return to the forgotten,



yet very familiar, world of his childhood in the Caribbean, he goes on to say:

En América Latina se nos ha enseñado que somos españoles. Es cierto, en parte, porque el elemento español forma parte de nuestra propia personalidad cultural y no puede negarse. Pero en aquel viaje a Angola descubrí que también éramos africanos. O mejor, que éramos mestizos. Que nuestra cultura era mestiza, se enriquecía con diversos aportes. Nunca, hasta entonces, había tenido conciencia de ello . . . En el Caribe, al que pertenezco, se mezcló la imaginación desbordada de los esclavos negros africanos con la de los nativos precolombinos y luego con la fantasía de los andaluces y el culto de los llegos por lo sobrenatural. Esa aptitud para mirar la realidad de cierta manera mágica es propia del Caribe y también del Brasil. De allí han surgido una literatura, una música, y una pintura como las de Wilfredo Lam, que son expresión estética de esta región del mundo . . . Yo creo que el Caribe me enseñó a ver la realidad de otra manera, a aceptar los elementos sobrenaturales como algo que forma parte de nuestra vida cotidiana.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, not all critics of García Márquez' fiction have responded to reality in this way and, ignoring the cross-cultural nature of his imagination, often subject his texts to very monocultural, Eurocentric, all too rational interpretations that distort and limit their visionary explorations. On the one hand, this is part of the wider appropriation of Latin American writers by Western critics. In the 1960s 'boom' period of the Latin American novel Western journals and magazines selected elements during interviews with Latin American authors which incorporated the writers' views about their own texts and their referents into a vision which was in itself European, rather than attempting to elucidate a Latin American 'universe' which was as valid as the European. Castro-Klarén cites, as an example of this, an interview with Carlos Fuentes on Italian television in 1968, soon after the second edition of his Cambio de piel had sold out:

Mientras que Carlos Fuentes se esforzaba por destacar que su novela no era más que una de las tantas novelas latinoamericanas ya publicadas en Italia e insistía en que la demanda de estas obras era debido al interés que existía por tal tipo de novelas (toda su teoría sobre la nueva narrativa aparece en esta entrevista), el reportero, reflejando la opinión de que Cambio de piel atraía tanto la atención del público Italiano porque el libro trataba del fascismo. El entrevistador declaraba: 'La

crítica Italiana no ha subrayado prácticamente el carácter mexicano de Cambio de piel salvo para preguntarse por qué un escritor de América Latina se ocupa de temas que hasta ahora hemos considerado específicamente nuestros, como por ejemplo la guerra, el fascismo y los campos de concentración . . . insisto en que en su libro la tradición europea es más evidente que las raíces latinoamericanas.'''

Castro-Klarén goes on to argue that this meditation on the historical referents in Carlos Fuentes' Cambio de piel is accomplished by a particularised type of reading, one which adopts a European discourse, and which dismisses the Latin American origins which inform it.

Similarly, in the prologue of a journal devoted to a retrospective on the 'boom,' Raymond L. Williams suggests that it is as a result of the transition to 'modern' which he perceives has occurred with these writers that an incorporation, an equal status and recognition, can be given to their works by critics and academics in the U.S. and Western Europe:

Their modernity and their writing ability is obviously a matter of international acceptance as the English professors, the historians and the French critics appropriate these writers as authentically 'theirs.'''

The effect created is one of them and us, and that otherness which presents itself in the mind of the North American and European critic serves two purposes - to maintain a self-serving image of the 'universal' standard intact, and to incorporate texts which emanate from a different poetics. In the case of Latin American literature, this is achieved by praising certain aspects of the texts themselves or their authors which establish direct influence links with the West, and also by commissioning translations which somehow reflect this whole lineage of paradigmatic influence flow.<sup>12</sup> As a result, a whole range of regionalist, documentary, feminist and popular literature which has been, and continues to be, produced in the area is largely ignored, and the magic of the so-called 'magical realist' authors torn from the cross-cultural psyche of the Americas and

turned into the latest jewel in the European modernist and surrealist crown.

The reception of English-language texts followed very similar lines and 'Caribbean' literature was not deemed worthy of attention until it was seen to resemble the very highest standards of Western literary tradition. Caribbean writers were described as looking to the 'mother country,' to England, for guidance and approval,<sup>13</sup> and Caribbean literature must today compete with literatures as diverse as New Zealand, Australian, Canadian, Indian, and African for space on the academic syllabus as a 'New English.' Even a writer so obviously concerned with the cross-cultural dialogue as Wilson Harris was at first interpreted within the confines of the canon of English literature. The following passage from William Walsh's book Commonwealth Literature is typical of this kind of critical approach:

There is a Wordsworthian intensity and passion in Harris's response to the structure and significance of the landscape, together with a Wordsworthian sense both of the way the natural forms work on the sensibility to produce '... a dim and undetermin'd sense/of unknown modes of being.'

As with Wordsworth too, though only in him at moments of the highest exaltation, Wilson Harris's vision of existence is one marked by the liquefaction of set limits. Boundaries are upset, edges blurred, different orders of being flow in on one another and the conventional conceptual pattern of the universe is shattered.

Like Lawrence, he attempts to examine not so much character as human stuff, not so much coal, as carbon.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the qualifier, "though only in him at moments of the highest exaltation," Walsh continues to place Harris within a Wordsworthian framework which limits and distorts his rigorously cross-cultural, deconstructive vision of reality, and the passage in the end reads like a list of easy and familiar reference points for the student of English.<sup>15</sup>

William Walsh's books on Commonwealth writers are typical of the way in which the practice of New Criticism<sup>16</sup> facilitated the

'adoption' of individual post-colonial authors by the 'parent' tradition. Despite their claims to objectivity, the New Critics assimilated post-colonial writers into a 'metropolitan' tradition and, as The Empire Writes Back points out, "prevented them from being seen as innovative, distinctive and subversive of imported European values."<sup>17</sup> The same kind of strategy is reproduced in Alfred J. MacAdam's Textual Confrontations: Comparative Readings in Latin American Literature in which he describes Latin American fiction as "a parodic, satiric inversion of the novel, romance, and history, a bizarre yet totally Western concept of literature as an author's reassessment of his personal relationship to tradition as well as the relationship of his national culture to the dominant cultures of the West."<sup>18</sup> There is no sense here of a specifically Latin American reality or any attempt to see through the 'bizarre' into a genuine cultural difference. Carlos Fuentes sees this as typical of a European complacency:

One of the basic cultural factors of Latin America is that it is an eccentric branch of the culture of the West. It is Western and it is not Western. So we feel that we have to know the culture of the West even better than a Frenchman or an Englishman, and at the same time we have to know our own culture. This sometimes means going back to the Indian cultures, whereas the Europeans feel they don't have to know our cultures at all. We have to know Quetzalcoatl and Descartes. They think Descartes is enough.<sup>19</sup>

This means that not only is García Márquez appropriated as a Western writer, but the visionary reality of his narratives is rationalized out of all existence.<sup>20</sup> This critical approach revolves around a particularly reductionist interpretation of the significance of 'myth' in his work. Myth occupies a dual function in the fictions of both García Márquez and Harris: as transcendent mythical vision which points the way to psychic integration, and as a process of demystifying myths - myths in the pejorative sense of 'what is not real,' especially the myths of history and of character. El otoño

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del patriarca, for instance, is a vast tangle of myth (in the sense of consolidated illusion), deception and untruth. The Patriarch himself is a source of fascination for García Márquez. For what could be the reality of a man whom no-one knows except in terms of a myth that has long ago acquired its own identity? In El general en su laberinto he attempts to answer that question and retrieves for Bolívar a complex, flesh and blood reality from the labyrinth of myth which transforms him into an icon.

But García Márquez' genuine interest in exposing the falsifications of history seems to have blinded critics to the very positive mythical elements in his fiction and the importance of myth and mythical systems in articulating the quest for integration of the fractured American psyche. In stressing the importance of history, critics like Gerald Martin<sup>21</sup> and Stephen Minta<sup>22</sup> refer to the mythical world of Macondo as an enjoyable, but distracting, illusion that must be discarded in favour of "the real world of experience and suffering."<sup>23</sup> This kind of opposition implies that the 'real world' is the world of appearances, the world we see around us when, for both Harris and García Márquez, the role of the imagination is to deconstruct this world of appearances, and to pluralize the very concept of reality. In this process, myth becomes a dynamic resource through which to challenge, rather than escape, the stasis of history.

Both writers believe that realism, as an artistic form, is insufficient for defining the reality of the Americas, either the centuries of exploitation and carnage which are its history, its tortuous modern political reality, or the mythical world of its indigenous and Afro-american peoples. In renouncing realism as an artistic form, Harris and García Márquez are also questioning conventional perceptions of reality and help to distinguish reality

from naive objectivity and the limits of rational enquiry. Scientific discoveries in new physics, and especially quantum theory, have shown that a simple everyday notion of objectivity is too limited an account even for physical reality. The latter displays a paradoxical elusiveness to which twentieth century scientists have had to be exceptionally flexible in their response, and the artistic vision of Harris and García Márquez demands a similar revolutionary change in sensibility from the reader. But MacAdam's comment that García Márquez "makes into a single moment what is *by nature* a process which begins and ends," (my italics)<sup>24</sup> reveals that the language of literary criticism has not always made this change in sensibility. Despite the radical challenge of literary theory in recent years,<sup>25</sup> much of the practice is still too rigidly Europeanized and rationalized to be able to question its own notion of 'preconditions' and interpret the 'magical reality' of García Márquez' fictions as anything other than negative:

The inability to accept the fundamental conditions of life, to accept those things which, like change and mortality, cannot be altered, is a fatal disadvantage. The mad, magical world of the Buendías that is often so amusing, so enchanting, is also the solitary world of a people who have taken refuge in madness or magic as the only alternatives to a world whose preconditions they cannot endure.<sup>26</sup>

Such interpretations completely miss the point of Cien años de soledad as an act of moral and visionary rebellion - of a refusal to accept such 'fundamental conditions' because they are repressive and alienating and because they deny the inner life of the characters, making ultimate fulfilment impossible. Although it is only one of the texts to be referred to in this study, Cien años is certainly the most famous and the most widely commented upon, and it is necessary to counteract the limitations of some critical approaches<sup>27</sup> and to retrieve the positive identity of this novel, if

we are to understand the special power of 'solitude' as it is manifested throughout the works of Harris and García Márquez.

Stephen Minta says that the Buendías "lack the tragic perspective"<sup>28</sup> and this is exactly their virtue. Refusing to accept things tragically, refusing to bow down to the novelistic criteria of good taste in the West, the Buendías charge through life's obstacles in a determined effort to forge their own world and achieve their goals:

Con la temeridad atroz con que José Arcadio Buendía atravesó la sierra para fundar a Macondo, con el orgullo ciego con que el coronel Aureliano Buendía promovió sus guerras inútiles, con la tenacidad insensata con que Úrsula aseguró la supervivencia de la estirpe, así buscó Aureliano Segundo a Fernanda sin un solo instante de desaliento.<sup>29</sup>

The Buendías make mistakes and their efforts are often misjudged (as with Aureliano's wars), but their strength of character also enables them to achieve greatness. They are always, for instance, pioneers of some sort - whether it be José Arcadio Buendía founding Macondo, Úrsula discovering the route to the next oasis of civilization, or José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo being the first to sit in the classroom. This directly negates the view that García Márquez' characters are conformists. Speaking of Cien años Julio Ortega writes:

In the human condition, the novel seems to be saying, conformity condemns us to solitude, to the absence of communion. Conformity reduces existence to the endless daily occurrences in which man is always the object of a world that determines him and in which he succumbs without full consciousness, without being able to fight back.<sup>30</sup>

Conformity probably does all this, but the Buendías do not conform, and they certainly fight back. Indeed, it is precisely because they do not conform that García Márquez' characters feel such solitude - 'absence of communion' only in the sense that their individuality and rebelliousness alienates them from convention, from those who conform.



Critics agree that solitude is the central theme of Cien años de soledad<sup>31</sup> but this is defined simply as a failure to communicate when in fact it is much more dialectical and ultimately more positive than this. This negative interpretation is hinged around the character of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, who is seen as the supreme example of man totally incapable of feeling. But the character of Aureliano is also more problematic than critical opinion has often assumed.

Ariel Dorfman points out that it is Aureliano only, and not the Buendías as a whole, who suffers the existential solitude of contemporary man:

Reducido a un cuerpo sin alma, podrido por la pérdida del futuro ('había llegado al término de toda esperanza, más allá de la gloria y la nostalgia de la gloria') sin poder acceder a otros ni al orden mágico de la muerte, Aureliano Buendía es el único personaje existencial de la novela, el único que vive la soledad del hombre contemporáneo, enfriada su imaginación en la búsqueda de un poder inútil.<sup>32</sup>

The other Buendías are not isolated in the same way and are not incapable of communion with others. Even Aureliano was not always so incapable of feeling. In one of her more depressed periods Úrsula concludes that her son "nunca había querido a nadie" and that "era simplemente un hombre incapacitado para el amor" (p.290) and many critics have agreed with this, even though the novel clearly indicates other readings.<sup>33</sup> For it is Aureliano who, as a young adolescent, grieves for the suffering of Eréndira and feels "una necesidad irresistible de amarla y protegerla" (p.108) when everyone else treats her as just another prostitute. Later, he enters easily into the innocent, childish world of Remedios, his love for her so complete that "encontró en ella la justificación que le hacía falta para vivir." (p.140) His world falls apart with her sudden and violent death and he is urged into the long and bloody civil wars which in the end brutalize him beyond all hope of human contact.

For a while he retains an inner sensitivity, writing verses in his spare moments, but the burning of these poems heralds his irrevocable decline into senseless, solitary isolation.

Aureliano's decline has been seen as synonymous with a decline of the Buendías, and their 'failure' symbolic of the failure of Latin American history.<sup>34</sup> But I find this reading extremely problematic. To many Latin American writers, and especially socialist writers such as García Márquez, the Cuban Revolution and the 'boom' of the Latin American novel were proof of the end of neo-colonialism and the beginning of true liberation. This is the spirit which Cien años embodies. Exuberant, hugely comic, a celebration of "este mundo donde había de todo," (p.278) the final apocalypse of the Buendías is not the end of Latin America but the end of neo-colonialism and its conscious or unconscious collaborators. Some critics feel that this notion of political necessity, which arises from García Márquez' commitment to socialism, does not correspond to the main thrust of his fiction,<sup>35</sup> but it is precisely this political commitment and optimism, this faith in man's unlimited possibilities, which constitutes the spirit of García Márquez' work and which renders Cien años de soledad a drama of consciousness and a quest for integration in the same mould as the fiction of Wilson Harris.

The process of recovery in these dramas begins with the cultivation of solitude. In the early stages of Harris' Heartland Stevenson admits: "The truth is sometimes I can't endure the thought of being absolutely alone"<sup>36</sup> and the novel becomes a lesson in cultivating such 'aloneness,' in journeying to the heart of one's own consciousness. Similarly, in Black Marsden Goodrich escapes having his personality swamped by Marsden's hypnotic power and is described as remaining "alone, utterly alone, as upon a post-

hypnotic threshold."<sup>37</sup> This state of solitude beyond all conscripting roles is, in Harris' terms, the condition of genuine freedom. Solitude in García Márquez' fiction is more dialectic as it does not always exist beyond such conscripting pressures, but for the most part it is the strength of the Buendías, what sets them apart from conventional society and its tendency to conform, and what enables them to embark on their own drama of consciousness. For some members of the family it is a precarious form of union as they take refuge in solitude - Pilar and Aureliano José, for instance, "eran, más que madre y hijo, cómplices en la soledad" (p.201) - Remedios the Beauty matures in solitude, Fernanda is humanised by it, and when combined with love it becomes the foremost regenerative and transcendent force in the novel. But like Harris' jungle, solitude in Cien años can be frighteningly destructive and alienating as well as ultimately transcendent. Aureliano is aware of this dual potential when he searches for Remedios "pero solamente la encontró en la imagen que saturaba su propia y terrible soledad." (p.119) With the growing bond between Aureliano Babilonia and José Arcadio later in the novel, García Márquez comments:

Aquel acercamiento entre dos solitarios de la misma sangre estaba muy lejos de la amistad, pero les permitió a ambos sobrellevar mejor la insondable soledad que al mismo tiempo los separaba y los unía. (p.407)

The Buendías have to learn to accept the dialectical nature of solitude. Like Stevenson and Goodrich, they must embrace 'aloneness' as the first stage to recovering their own authentic identity and freeing themselves from all conscripting roles but they must also be aware of this as a means to 'shared solitude' and ultimate integration.

In this thesis, then, I use solitude in the way that Jung describes a process of individuation culminating in psychic wholeness. In the fictions of both García Márquez and Harris this

process focuses on the necessary interaction between the rational and irrational, between scientific knowledge and intuitive wisdom, on the multifaceted nature of myth and time, and on the role of woman as muse of identity, the female principle to which the male tradition must be reconciled.

The spiritual journeys undertaken by the characters of Harris and García Márquez are attempts to explore hidden, repressed areas of consciousness, what Harris calls "the re-constitution of spaces in the West Indian psyche,"<sup>22</sup> and both writers return to the anguished birth of their mestizo identity, to the period of Discovery and Conquest, where the complex and fractured psyche of my title is born of a violently dialectical womb. This thesis begins, then, with a study of the contexts in which both writers have shaped their narratives: the nature of the collision between Amerindian and Conquistador and the significance of its impact; a history of repression, modern political reality and the pressure for a 'literature of commitment'; the inadequacy of realism for defining the 'unreality' of the Americas; and the retrieval of an Amerindian and African consciousness, as well as an exploration of the unconscious, central to the development of magical realism. The structure of Part One, i.e. the division into Reality I and Reality II, reflects the dialectical nature of the texts to be studied in Part Two, and refers to the work of Harris and García Márquez in a wider context of Latin American and Caribbean literature.

Part Two is a detailed comparative study of specific texts by Harris and García Márquez. Chapter Four acknowledges the literary influences of both writers and shows them at an early transitional phase in their journeys of exploration. Harris' Heartland and García Márquez' early stories are read as the expression of

breakdown, of fracture, and as the first tentative stages for progress and transcendence. Chapters Five - Seven trace the stages of this quest, the nature of solitude, of shared solitude, and of psychic wholeness, and the radicalizing of the conventions of novelistic form in articulating that quest. Though analysis is made of other texts where particularly relevant, these chapters focus specifically on García Márquez' Cien años de soledad and Harris' trilogy Carnival, The Infinite Rehearsal and The Four Banks of the River of Space. While there is a sense of progression from one chapter to the next, reflecting both the stages in my argument and the movement from early to later texts, it is hoped that a critical approach that responds to myth as well as history will break an easy sense of linearity so that the final chapters will also act as connecting circles around the same theme. Chapter 7 especially, in its focus on form in the context of the new physics, is intended to reiterate many of the themes and structures already analysed in relation to myth. The conclusion reminds us of the comic nature of both sets of texts, of an anti-serious undercutting of their own ideals, emphasizing once again the dialectical nature of unity, dependent as it is on a delicate equilibrium.

NOTES

Introduction: IDENTITY AND ACADEMIC STUDY

1. Harris: Tradition, the Writer and Society (London: New Beacon, 1967), p.30.
2. This is not to ignore the importance of French and Dutch in the Caribbean, or of Portuguese in Latin America, but merely to focus on the language groups of the two writers under study and the way in which they have been categorized and divided. Later textual analysis also looks at Portuguese and French texts in translation.
3. This is, of course, an ongoing process and since I began this research academic departments have become more cross-cultural. It is hoped that this statement will soon be out of date.
4. V.S. Naipaul: The Middle Passage (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p.29.
5. Edward Brathwaite: The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy (O.U.P., 1973), originally published as Rights of Passage (1967), Masks (1968), Islands (1969).
6. See Guyana Dreaming: The Art of Aubrey Williams, ed. Anne Walmsley (Aarhus: Dangaroo, 1990).
7. El general en su laberinto (Madrid: Mondadori, 1989), p.186.
8. *ibid.* p.271.
9. El olor de la guayaba: conversaciones con Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza (Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera, 1982), pp.73-74.
10. S. Castro-Klarén and H. Campos: 'Traducciones, Tirajes, Ventas y Estrellas: El Boom' in Ideologies and Literature, 4, no.17, (second cycle) (1983), 319-338, (p.320).
11. R.L. Williams: 'Preface' in Latin American Literary Review, 15, no.29 (1987), 7-11, (p.10).
12. For this analysis I am indebted to Gonzalo Parra-Ramírez: M.A. Thesis, University of Warwick, 1988.
13. See eg. 'Introduction' to From the Green Antilles, ed. Barbara Howes (London: Souvenir Press, 1967), pp.xi-xvi.
14. Walsh: Commonwealth Literature (O.U.P., 1973), pp.53-54.
15. Harris' work is not normally approached in the same way today. He has a reputation as a 'strange' and 'difficult' writer and in comparison with the high critical profile of his Latin American counterparts his work is neglected. This has at least meant avoiding the distortion and misappropriation that García Márquez' work has undergone and the few full-length studies of Harris' work that exist - such as Michael Gilkes': Wilson Harris and the

Caribbean Novel (1975). Hena Maes-Jelinek's: Wilson Harris (1982) and Sandra Drake's Wilson Harris and the Modern Tradition (1986) - are intelligent, in depth studies of the peculiar originality of his imagination. Relative isolation, however, breeds its own distortions and the younger Harris, working as a surveyor in the Guyanan jungle, is often described as 'whiling away his few leisure hours reading Hegel, Heidegger and other philosophical texts.' Harris has denied this and its currency only perpetuates the myth of him as esoteric and inaccessible which in turn limits his readership.

16. For a discussion of 'New Criticism and post-colonial theory' see The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures, eds. Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1989), pp.160-161.

17. *ibid.* p.161.

18. MacAdam: Textual Confrontations (University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.7.

19. Carlos Fuentes interview, 'The Art of Fiction, LXVIII' in Paris Review, 23, no.82 (1981), 140-175, (p.151).

20. Gordon Brotherston's work is a notable exception in its contextualizing of García Márquez in relation to relevant Amerindian discourses. See eg. 'García Márquez and the Secrets of Saturno Santos' in Contemporary Latin American Fiction, ed. Salvador Bacarisse (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1980), pp.48-53.

21. Martin's impressive Marxist analysis is itself a radical intervention into what he describes as the misreading/mythreading of Latin American literary history, and in particular Cien años de soledad. Though he rightly identifies a tendency to 'mythologize' which continues to undermine Latin America, his analysis underestimates the resources of myth to challenge such historical appropriations. See 'On "magical" and social realism in García Márquez' in Gabriel García Márquez: New Readings, eds. McGuirk and Cardwell (C.U.P., 1987), pp.95-116.

22. See Stephen Minta: Gabriel García Márquez: Writer of Colombia (London: Cape, 1987).

23. Minta, p.148.

24. MacAdam: 'Gabriel García Márquez: A Commodious Vicus of Recirculation' in Modern Latin American Narratives: The Dreams of Reason (University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp.78-87 (p.80).

25. The concern of post-structuralist critics to dismantle assumptions about language and textuality and to stress the importance of ideological construction in social-textual relations illuminates crucial issues in post-colonial literature. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out, however, much of the practice still takes place in a Eurocentric framework, see 'Replacing theory: post-colonial writing and literary theory' in The Empire Writes Back, pp.155-194.

26. Minta. p.157.

27. This is not to ignore the value of much critical work on the novel, in particular Michael Wood's Gabriel Garcia Márquez: One Hundred Years of Solitude (C.U.P., 1990); Edwin Williamson also offers a more positive reading of the novel (though his contextualizing of 'magical realism' is very different to my own) in 'Magical realism and the theme of incest in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*' in Gabriel Garcia Márquez: New Readings, eds. McGuirk and Cardwell (C.U.P., 1987), pp.45-63; on the whole, however, the trajectory of the Buendías is interpreted as a negative one and Minta's analysis is representative of this.

28. Minta. p.155.

29. Cien años de soledad (Madrid: Selecciones Austral, 1985 [1967]), p.252.

30. Ortega: 'One Hundred Years of Solitude' in Poetics of Change: The New Spanish American Narrative, trans. Galen D. Greaser (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), pp.85-95 (p.94).

31. Some critics have gone so far as to ally it with the Marxist concept of alienation, see eg. José David Saldivar: 'Ideology and Deconstruction in Macondo' in Latin American Literary Review, 13, no.25 (1985), 29-43.

32. Dorfman: Imaginación y violencia en América (Santiago: Editorial Anagrama, 1972), p.168.

33. Critics often draw on García Márquez' own words that "Los Buendía no eran capaces de amor, y ahí está el secreto de su soledad, de su frustración ." (El olor de la guayaba) But García Márquez seems to enjoy substantiating the pessimistic interpretation of his novel on the one hand, while on the other totally contradicting this view. The novel clearly shows the Buendías to have a huge capacity for love and the above comment reveals more about García Márquez' abilities to fuel critical momentum than it does about his novel.

34. See eg. D.P. Gallagher: Modern Latin American Literature (O.U.P., 1973), p.163.

35. See eg. William Rowe: 'Gabriel Garcia Márquez' in Modern Latin American Fiction: A Survey, ed. John King (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), pp.191-204 (p.197).

36. Harris: Heartland (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p.17.

37. Harris: Black Marsden (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p.111.

38. Harris: 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' in Explorations: A Selection of Talks and Articles 1966-1981, ed. Hena Maes-Jelinek (Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1981), pp.20-42 (p.39).



PART ONE:

'CONTEXTS'

Chapter 1) REALITY I: HISTORY

(a) History and Modern Political Reality

The Americas have been an exploited continent from the time of Columbus to the present. Eighty million inhabitants on the eve of the Conquest were decimated, through the barbaric slaughter and diseases of the conquistadores, to just ten million by the middle of the sixteenth century. Many more Africans died in the horrors of The Middle Passage or were enslaved to a vicious system of greed and torture. Ideological justifications were never in short supply. The bleeding of the New World became an act of charity, an argument for the faith. With the later guilt, a whole system of rationalizations for guilty consciences was devised. In his book Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent, Eduardo Galeano describes how the people of the Americas have suffered, and continue to suffer, the curse of their own wealth. Gold, silver, cocoa, cotton, rubber, coffee, fruit, sugar, oil, iron, tin, copper and nitrates are among the 'open veins' whose drainage he traces and analyses. Galeano's range and depth of material argues forcefully and consistently the fact that: "In these lands we are not experiencing the primitive infancy of capitalism but its vicious senility. Underdevelopment isn't a stage of development, but its consequence. Latin America's underdevelopment arises from external development, and continues to feed it." The task-masters may change but the economic servitude and exploitation of the Americas remains much the same:

Slave ships no longer ply the ocean. Today the slavers operate from the ministries of labor. African wages, European prices. What are the Latin American coups d'état but successive episodes in a war of pillage? The dictators hardly grasp their sceptors

before they invite foreign concerns to exploit the local, cheap, and abundant work force, the unlimited credit, the tax exemptions, and the natural resources that await them on a silver tray.<sup>2</sup>

Bananas have been just one of these natural resources and the 'bananization' of Central and South America, with the consequent hegemony of the United States in the name of the United Fruit Company, shows the character of modern Imperial greed and exploitation. In his novel El Papa Verde Miguel Angel Asturias describes the process of Central American conquest and plunder in the figure of Minor Keith, the uncrowned king of the region, great white father of United Fruit, devourer of nations:

'Tenemos muelles, ferrocarriles, tierras, edificios, manantiales,' enumeraba el presidente; 'corre el dólar, se habla inglés y se enarbola nuestra bandera.'

. . . Chicago no podía menos que sentir orgullo de ese hijo que marchó con una mancuerna de pistolas y regresaba a reclamar su puesto entre los emperadores de la carne, reyes de los ferrocarriles, reyes del cobre, reyes de la goma de mascar.<sup>3</sup>

In The 42nd Parallel John Dos Passos traces the dazzling career of Keith and United Fruit:

In Europe and the United States people had started to eat bananas, so they cut down the jungles through Central America to plant bananas, and built railroads to haul the bananas, and every year more steamboats of the Great White Fleet steamed north loaded with bananas, and that is the history of the American empire of the Caribbean, and the Panama canal and the future Nicaragua canal and the marines and the battleships and the bayonets.<sup>4</sup>

For the U.S. did not limit itself to economic domination of the region. It came to regard Central America as its own 'backyard' and installed puppet dictators whose ruthlessness and dynastic greed were ignored so long as their loyalty to U.S. interests was maintained. As Roosevelt is alleged to have said of Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza: "He's a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch."

But more tragic than the international system of brutality and domination suffered by each of the countries of the Americas, is the

reproduction of similar systems within each of them. The history of the Americas holds many examples of internal bloodbaths, of which the period of 'La Violencia' in Colombia is just one. As Galeano outlines, for ten years, from 1948 to 1957, small and large plantations, desert and farmland, valley and forest and Andean plateau were entrenched in civil war. Whole communities were destroyed, revolutionary guerillas and criminal bands multiplied, and at least 180,000 were left dead. The violence began with a confrontation between Liberal and Conservative parties. The Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán had won great popular prestige and was seen as a threat to the established order. When he was shot dead the violence erupted. First the spontaneous *bogotazo* - an uncontrollable human tide in the streets of the capital; then the violence spread to the countryside, where bands organized by the Conservatives had been agitating for some time. The years of repression endured by the peasants finally exploded and the government's response was to send police and soldiers to cut off testicles, slash pregnant women's bellies, and throw babies in the air to catch on bayonet points - the order of the day being "don't leave even the seed." It was a war of incredible cruelty and it became worse as it went on. New ways of killing came into vogue: the *corte corbata*, for example, left the tongue hanging from the neck. Rape, arson and plunder became the norm; people were quartered or burned alive, skinned or slowly cut in pieces. The first guerilla leaders, determined to take revenge but without clear political vision, only added to the destruction, letting off blood and steam without purpose. Conservatives and Liberals eventually signed a peace pact in Madrid, agreeing to take turns in power under a banner of national unity.<sup>6</sup> But 'national unity' has never materialized for the country and Colombia's chaotic and violent

modern political reality is in many ways the legacy of these years, made only more oppressive by the warring drug cartels of Cali and Medellín.

The ten years of fierce repression and genocide which many Colombians suffered during the period of 'La Violencia' has been the almost uninterrupted fate of the continent's indigenous people. Exiled in their own land, condemned to an eternal exodus, the native peoples of the Americas were pushed into the poorest areas - arid mountains, the middle of deserts - as the dominant civilization extended its frontiers. Today they participate in an economic and social order which assigns them the role of victim - the most exploited of the exploited. They buy and sell a good part of the few things they consume and produce, at the mercy of powerful and voracious intermediaries who charge much and pay little; they are day labourers on plantations, the cheapest work force, and soldiers in the mountains. In countries like Guatemala they are at the centre of national economic life and Galeano describes the continuous annual cycle wherein the Maya-Quiché leave their sacred lands "to contribute two hundred thousand pairs of hands to the harvesting of coffee, cotton and sugar in the lowlands. They are transported in trucks like cattle, and it is not always need, but sometimes liquor, that makes them decide to go. The contractors provide a marimba band and plenty of *aguardiente* and when the Indian sobers up he is already in debt. He will pay it off laboring on hot and strange lands which - perhaps with a few centavos in his pocket, perhaps with tuberculosis or malaria - he will leave after a few months. The army collaborates efficiently in the task of convincing the reluctant."<sup>6</sup> In her book Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú Rigoberta Menchú traces the increasing politicization of her own Indian community in Guatemala and their attempts to break this vicious

annual cycle. Their struggle for justice, for the right to their own land and culture, has been met by horrifying incidents of savagery on the part of the army, the nature of which resemble atrocities which plague the modern political reality of emerging countries throughout the Americas:

Le amarraban, le amarraban los testiculos, los órganos de mi hermano, atrás con un hilo y le mandaban a correr. Entonces, eso no permitia, no aguantaba mi hermanito los grandes dolores y gritaba, pedía auxilio. Y lo dejan en un pozo, no sé como le llaman, un hoyo donde hay agua, un poco de lodo y allí lo dejaron desnudo durante toda la noche. Mi hermano estuvo con muchos cadáveres ya muertos en el hoyo donde no aguantaba el olor de todos los muertos. Había mas gentes allí, torturadas. Allí donde estuvo, él había reconocido muchos catequistas que también habían sido secuestrados en otras aldeas y que estaban en pleno sufrimiento como él estaba. Mi hermano estuvo mas de dieciséis días de torturas. Le cortaron las uñas, le cortaron los dedos, le cortaron la piel, quemaron parte de su piel. Muchas heridas, las primeras heridas estaban hinchadas, estaban infectadas. él seguía viviendo. Le raparon la cabeza, le dejaron puro pellejo y, al mismo tiempo, cortaron el pellejo de la cabeza y lo bajaron por un lado y los dos lados y le cortaron la parte gorda de la cara. Mi hermano llevaba torturas de todas partes en su cuerpo, cuidando muy bien las arterias y las venas para que pudiera aguantar las torturas y no se muriera.<sup>7</sup>

It would be hard to imagine anything more gross, more senseless, than this calculated brand of clinical torture. But, as I have tried to convey in these few pages, such acts of barbarity are the daily reality in a land of dictators and death-squads, armies trained in extermination, C.I.A. backed 'democracies' and armed drugs mafia. This is not to suggest that there is no positive relief. The courage and determination of its people to affect social change, and the historical successes in both Cuba and Nicaragua, have inspired many throughout the world. But centuries of exploitation and carnage cannot always be eradicated and some breed habits more brutal than before. It is not a continent where one can easily remain unaligned.

(b) Literary Response - Literature of Commitment

In such a highly charged context, artists are frequently motivated by the immediate political reality of their country and a responsibility to denounce repression. The pressure of such 'responsibility' is an important factor in understanding the literary output of the writer of the Americas. The collection of essays entitled They Shoot Writers, Don't They?<sup>8</sup> is a study of writers under pressure and looks at the predicament of the writer in Latin America. In the U.S.A. and the West, according to Vargas Llosa, to be a writer means to assume a personal responsibility, i.e. to achieve a work which enriches the language and culture of one's country. In Peru, Bolivia, Nicaragua, on the contrary, "to be a writer means, at the same time, to assume a social responsibility: at the same time that you develop a personal literary work, you should serve, through your writing but also through your actions, as an active participant in the solution of the economic, political and cultural problems of your society. There is no way to escape this obligation."<sup>9</sup>

But how do we define literature of 'commitment,' literature that meets this social responsibility? Wilson Harris and García Márquez have both displayed an ambivalent attitude towards the term, while at the same time both can be described as 'committed' writers. This ambivalence focuses mainly on the notion of form and debates as to whether realism is the ideal revolutionary mode. These debates have, in themselves, been complex and before considering the texts of Harris and García Márquez it is necessary to examine the different, and overlapping, contexts that have influenced the Latin

American and Caribbean writer's response to the historical moment.

This discussion will begin with debates that took place in the Soviet Union as to the role of the writer in the revolution and the appropriate form for revolutionary literature, and will then look at ways in which these debates developed in Latin American revolutionary societies, specifically Cuba and Nicaragua. Asturias' El Señor Presidente and Carpentier's El siglo de las luces are analysed as typically Latin American examples of the political novel in that they debate and interrogate political themes and at the same time experiment at the level of form with mythical, as well as historical versions of reality. Though this is the synthesis achieved by García Márquez in novels such as Cien años de soledad, this chapter will focus on his earlier, more realistic, novels of social commitment and the uneasy synthesis between political protest and poetic exploration that is particular to El otoño del patriarca. As well as the cross-pollination of ideas between the Soviet Union and Latin America, the debate as to whether realism was the ideal revolutionary mode shifted to Africa in the 1950s and 1960s where the emergent post-colonial nations argued vehemently about the merits of realism, as opposed to surrealism or anti-realism. Wilson Harris is very much a part of this debate and has been critical of the influence of some African literary theory on literary development in the Caribbean where, he feels, commitment can never be separated from a hybridization of culture which demands, as in Latin America, a mythical as well as a historical exploration of reality.

In the early twentieth century, the Soviet Union witnessed lively and furious debates as to the role of the writer in society and how, artistically, the writer could best support the revolution. Mayakovsky, a powerful orator and ardent Futurist, is an important



Despite Mayakovsky's passionate conviction to the Soviet Revolution (his poems 'My Soviet Passport' and 'Vladimir Ilyich Lenin' were taught in all Soviet Schools), by 1930 all his plays were banned and most of his poetry severely censored.<sup>14</sup> The doctrine of 'socialist realism,' which was formally ratified at the Party Congress of 1933, had already become the official Party-approved art, and in its

definition of the 'correct' relationship between literature and the revolution there was little room for Mayakovsky's interventions and dissent.<sup>15</sup>

Soviet socialist realism was the artistic method whereby the artist fulfilled the demands required of him/her by the Communist Party, and was based on a direct relationship between the artist and the process of building a new society. Its three aesthetic principles were *narodnost* (people-ness), *klássovost* (class-ness), and *partínost* (party-ness), of which the latter was the most specific: "Partínost embodies, or 'demands from the artist,' a threefold conscious decision: (1) art must fulfil a specific social function; (2) that function is to further the interests of the masses; (3) to further the interests of the masses art must become part of the activity of the Communist Party."<sup>16</sup> Under the terms of *narodnost* literature must be written in simple, comprehensible language, without stylistic experiment.

According to these principles, it is possible to dismiss the imagery and experiment of schools such as the Futurists and Formalists as bourgeois decadence and anti-revolutionary. Lunachásky, for instance, urged the marxist critic to condemn "the frame of mind of the artist who tried with such formal methods to cut himself off from reality."<sup>17</sup> Surprisingly, there was no deconstruction of the concept of 'reality' as itself a capitalist, bourgeois construct. The existence of a Soviet reality was simply accepted and the emphasis was on the duty of the artist to convey and sustain this reality. Lenin, though no admirer of the Futurists, had been attracted to the idea of the inspiring vision that would "support and strengthen the energy of the working man."<sup>18</sup> The gulf between reality and vision will cause no harm, Lenin felt, provided the dreamer really believes in his vision, looks closely at

reality "and then compares his observations to his castles in the air and works conscientiously to turn his fantasy into fact. When there is a point of contact between dream and life, then everything is for the best."<sup>19</sup> In so far as vision gave rise to bold, positive activity, Lenin thought it absurd to deny its value. "Unfortunately we have too little of such dreaming in our movement," was his comment.

This same debate is explored in Milan Kundera's Life is Elsewhere where Jaromil, having just praised André Breton and the surrealist movement, continues:

It is symbolically significant that this occurred at about the same time as the socialist revolution in Russia. The liberation of the human imagination entailed the same leap into the realm of freedom as the liberation from economic thralldom.

The character who then joins the debate, however, expresses the view that was to prevail in Stalinist Soviet circles:

He stated his belief that modern art was decadent and that the epoch in art which best corresponded to the proletarian revolution was socialist realism. Not André Breton, but Jiri Volker - the founder of Czech socialist poetry - must be our model!<sup>20</sup>

The dictates of socialist realism can be seen in retrospect as imposing a kind of order on a chaotic artistic scene and Sholokov's speech at the Second Writers' Congress (1954) is a valid defence:

Our furious enemies in other countries say that we Soviet authors write according to the dictates of the Party. But the fact of the matter is a little different. Each of us writes according to the dictates of his heart, but all our hearts belong to the Party and to the people, whom we serve with our art.<sup>21</sup>

But also valid is Kundera's criticism of the imposition of socialist realism on Czech literary culture:

Modern Czech art had always proclaimed its allegiance to the Communist revolution; but when the revolution arrived, it declared itself to be totally committed to a program of readily intelligible, popular realism and modern art was rejected as a monstrous product of bourgeois decadence. 'That's our dilemma,' said one of the guests. 'Should we betray the art we grew up with, or the revolution we admire?'<sup>22</sup>

Jaromil betrays both the art he grew up with and the transcendent possibilities of imagination to conform to the needs of socialist realism, whose often crude and prosaic content Kundera ridicules:

Then the first poet rose to his feet and recited a poem about a girl who broke off with her beloved, a young man working at the lathe next to her own, because he was lazy and failed to fulfil his production quotas. The young man did not want to lose his girl, and so he proceeded to work with such enormous zeal that the red star of a socialist hero of labor was soon pinned to his machine. Other poets gradually took the floor and recited poems about peace, Lenin and Stalin, martyrs in the anti-fascist struggle, and workers who surpass quotas.<sup>23</sup>

Such pressure to conform to a specific artistic doctrine not only gives rise to crude and often banal subject matter, but also stills active literary debate. As Salman Rushdie says (in an article strangely prophetic of his own situation today): "Where there is no debate, it is hard to go on remembering, every day, that there is a suppressed side to every argument."<sup>24</sup> This is exactly the case under Stalin's rule of the Soviet Union. As C.V. James says in his book Soviet Socialist Realism: "Perhaps Stalin really did corrupt and distort 'reality,' but whereas in another society he might have encountered much more outspoken opposition from the writers, in the U.S.S.R. this could not happen because the writer's function is to support the party, whatever it does." (p.101) He then goes on to quote K.P.Thompson who says that in such circumstances the Soviet writer ". . . ceases to be an intellectual, a creator of ideas, and becomes retailer of the ideas of others . . . He no longer searches for the truth; he begins with the truth as revealed in the pronouncements of Party leaders. . ."<sup>25</sup>

The attempts of socialist realism to forge a relationship between the artist and the politician and to find a place for literature within the process of history, teach us above all that a revolutionary writer must remain an intellectual also, in Sartre's definition of an intellectual as "someone who is faithful to a

political and social body but never stops contesting it."<sup>26</sup> Alejo Carpentier explores these issues in El siglo de las luces where the characters of Victor and Esteban debate the positions of politician and artist respectively, under the pressures of an increasingly deteriorating revolution. Esteban regrets the limiting of artistic forms:

Hasta la música está racionalizada - dijo - Han llegado a creer que quien escriba una sonata falta a sus deberes revolucionarios.<sup>27</sup>

and is concerned about the general decay of the arts; to which Victor replies:

Estamos cambiando la faz del mundo, pero lo único que les preocupa es la mala calidad de una pieza teatral. Estamos transformando la vida del hombre, pero se duelen de que unas gentes de letras no puedan reunirse ya para leer idilios y pendejadas. ¡Serían capaces de perdonar la vida a un traidor, a un enemigo del pueblo, con tal de que hubiese escrito hermosos versos! (p.126)

Esteban develops a critical sensibility and appreciates the need for active discourse (see p.130). But the more Victor becomes involved in political life the less he questions the excesses of the revolution:

Esteban se sentía desconcertado ante la increíble servidumbre de una mente vigorosa y enérgica, pero tan absolutamente politizada que rehusaba el examen crítico de los hechos, negándose a ver las más flagrantes contradicciones . . . (p.148)

As their positions crystallize the dialectic becomes that of idealism vs. realism:

'Contradicciones y más contradicciones - murmuró Esteban - Yo soñaba con una Revolución tan distinta.' '¿Y quien te mandaba creer en lo que no era? - preguntó Victor - ' (p.149)

But this is literature of the Americas, not the Soviet Union, and Victor's practical realism that does not allow for Esteban's visionary and transcendent imagination can never be valid. It is said in Isabel Allende's La casa de los espíritus that:

El marxismo no tiene ni la menor oportunidad en América Latina. ¿No ves que no contempla el lado mágico de las cosas? Es una

doctrina atea, práctica y funcional. Aquí no puede tener éxito!<sup>28</sup>

But of course it does triumph and it is a Marxist revolution that does allow for "the magical side of things," at least until its brutal overthrow by Pinochet and the armed forces. This emphasis on the visionary and transcendent possibilities of imagination is what distinguishes revolutionary literature in the Americas from the mimetic, socialist realist model of the Soviet Union. Outward reality remains a smokescreen that must be penetrated, a construct that must be deconstructed through literature.

Though in many ways influenced by the Soviet example, the Cuban Revolution avoided too narrow and uncreative a definition of the appropriate form for revolutionary literature. Cuban intellectuals pluralized the relationship of literature to the revolution and recognised that literature can articulate the forms of liberation through a symbolic as well as a literal representation of revolutionary ideals.<sup>29</sup> Many of these discussions are reproduced in Judith A. Weiss' Casa de las Américas: An Intellectual Review in the Cuban Revolution.<sup>30</sup> Angel Rama, for instance, was strongly critical of pseudo-sociological treatises that passed for novels and reiterated the view of art as a "discovery of reality in the most unexpected places."<sup>31</sup> Italo Calvino, also present at these discussions, agreed with Cuban intellectuals in opposing the view that realism was an essential form for socialist writers. He praised the balance of fantasy and realism that Cuba had been producing since the Revolution, as a sign of a healthy imagination coexisting with a healthy sense of reality.<sup>32</sup> As in the Soviet Union, the artist had a responsibility to act, to be physically present in the rebuilding of society, but this allegiance demanded neither the simplifying of artistic vision nor the sacrifice of the artist's critical distance. As Regis Debray sums it up:

Writers and artists find themselves fulfilling duties required by the nation, in addition to pursuing the single objective of the creative worker. The revolutionary intellectual therefore must meet their responsibility as teachers and interpreters of the new reality while expressing, as artists and writers, the tension and fervour of a society that is in the process of being built, all the while never losing the critical eye of the intellectual.<sup>33</sup>

The role of the artist and writer has always carried much more status in the Latin American political process than was the case in the Soviet Union. Historically, many Communist and Socialist parties were founded and run by artists and intellectuals. The Mexican Communist Party had, at one time, three painters - Diego Rivera, Siqueiros and Xavier Guerrero - on its executive Committee. Pablo Neruda, who is intimately associated with the Chilean Communist Party, is an important example of the image of the writer in Latin America, the way in which a writer can capture public attention and become a rallying figure. The fact that Neruda died just after the Pinochet coup may have been coincidence, but in the popular imagination the two events are linked.<sup>34</sup> The great poet died of a broken heart is the legend and, fittingly, his funeral became the first public demonstration against the military government.

The most outstanding example of the poet as politician has been Sandinista Nicaragua when a plethora of writers - including Sergio Ramirez, Tomás Borge, Ernesto Cardenal, Omar Cabezas, and Rosario Murillo - were Frente ministers. Taking on the roles of government officials and politicians, thus moving between the dream world and the real world, shaping both simultaneously, can be a difficult experience for creative artists. In response to the question "how can a poet be a public official?" Ernesto Cardenal replied: "with difficulty. But you have to remember the context in which I live within the Nicaraguan revolution. I'm less a politician than a revolutionary serving the cause of my people."<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Sergio

Ramírez always felt "like a writer on loan to the revolution."<sup>36</sup>

But respect for the arts and the artist was uniquely high during the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and unlike the Soviet Union where the importance of the artist's role could not be guaranteed, it was typical of Nicaraguan writers to conclude triumphantly:

Hacemos la revolución cuando escribimos un poema<sup>37</sup>

The belief that a poet was necessary to society, and the dignity and strength such necessity carried with it, had become synonymous with Nicaraguan society, as had the relationship between poetry and ordinary human activity. Poetry was an ordinary human activity here, written in local workshops, in private, even on the battlefield, and produced in collections such as Poesía de las Fuerzas Armadas (1985) by the Ministry of Culture. But it was not so much that the Sandinista Revolution had triggered a rebirth of popular creativity, rather that it was such activity which in many ways created the Revolution. As Ramírez explains: "Nuestra Revolución ha sido, como pocas en América Latina, un fenómeno masivo. La insurrección fue una variada forma de creación cultural y política . . . "<sup>38</sup> Perhaps it was for this reason that there was no need to formulate a cultural and artistic ideology, and indeed this was strongly avoided:

This is something which seems very important to me, that no one sits down to write recipes about what literature should be, what sculpture should be, what painting should be. Here we simply try to provide the possibilities for creativity.<sup>39</sup>

Or as Tomás Borge puts it:

My view is that within a certain basic context of identification with the revolutionary process revolutionary writers must be allowed to grow their own wings so they can fly to whatever heights they please.<sup>40</sup>

Far from being limited to a form of socialist realism, then, revolutionary writers in the Americas have been encouraged to intuit the transcendent possibilities of the human psyche and to harness



these to the process of revolutionary change. For the removal of the dictator, as Nicaragua's experience testifies, will not in itself produce the conditions required for a sustained political revolution. This must come from within.

In its combination of outright political protest and the more subtle intuition of a transcendent, psychical liberation, Miguel Angel Asturias' El Señor Presidente is one of the first truly impressive political novels of the Americas. The utter desperation of life under a ruthlessly repressive dictatorship is immediately rendered:

A veces, en lo mejor del sueño, les despertaban . . . el sollozar de una ciega que se soñaba cubierta de moscas, colgando de un clavo, como la carne en las carnicerías. A veces, los pasos de una patrulla que a golpes arrastraba a un prisionero político, seguido de mujeres que limpiaban las huellas de sangre con los pañuelos empapados en llanto. A veces, los ronquidos de un valetudinario tífoso o la respiración de una sordomuda encinta que lloraba de miedo porque sentía un hijo en las entrañas.<sup>41</sup>

and this is sustained with each of the early chapters climaxing in a particularly brutal death. But even at this stage the corruption and brutality of the regime is juxtaposed with the poeticity of natural description. As chapter 3 begins, for instance, a picture of the President's lackeys is built up. The next paragraph then begins:

La sanguaza del amanecer teñía los bordes del embudo que las montañas formaban a la ciudad regadita como caspa en la campina.

That there is something *other* than sheer brutality still existent in life is made explicit after the particularly savage murder of Pelele:

Y nadie vio nada, pero en una de las ventanas del Palacio Arzobispal, los ojos de un santo ayudaban a bien morir al infortunado y en el momento en que su cuerpo rodaba por las gradas, su mano con esposa de amatista, le absolvía abriéndole el Reino de Dios. (p.54)

And as Pelele gains entry into another world, so the reader, in the

next paragraph, enters a visionary world of nature which exists beyond the crude reality of the dictatorship:

. . . mal vestidos de luna corrían las calles por las calles sin saber bien lo que había sucedido y los árboles de la plaza se tronaban los dedos en la pena de no poder decir con el viento, por los hilos telefónicos, lo que acababa de pasar. (p.55)

Yet even nature is disrupted by the recent events, and although there is contact between a visionary and a man-made reality (eg. in the visions which haunt Rodas, pp.61-62, and in Miguel's discourse with the dream world pp.150-151), it is only when Miguel becomes entwined with the poetic and visionary thrust in the novel:

Al marcharse el mayor, Cara de Angel se tocó para saber si era el mismo que a tantos había empujado hacia la muerte, el que ahora, ante el azul infrangible de la mañana, empujaba a un hombre hacia la vida. (p.182)

that it gains strength to truly transcend the reality of the dictatorship. Chapter 27, which features General Canales' own waking to the horrors of the dictatorship, ends on the poetic awakening of the novel:

Al pintar el alba se despidieron en la frontera. Sobre la esmeralda del campo, sobre las montañas del bosque tupido que los pájaros convertían en cajas de música, y sobre las selvas pasaban las nubes con forma de lagarto llevando en los lomos tesoros de luz. (p.201)

Gradually, the focus moves from the purveyors of evil - the President and all those under his hold - to those struggling to preserve integrity and virtue - Fedina, Camila, Canales and then Miguel. The chapter entitled 'La tumba viva' is an almost incantatory tribute to the proud dignity of a single human being in the face of outrageous oppression and humiliation. Fedina Rodas, through the force of her own inner grace, transcends all the horrors inflicted upon her by becoming the living tomb of her dead child:

Y cuando el llanto le faltó que ya no pudo llorar, se fue sintiendo la tumba de su hijo, que de nuevo lo encerraba en su vientre, que era suyo su último interminable sueño. Incisoria alegría partió un instante la eternidad de su dolor. La idea de ser la tumba de su hijo le acariciaba el corazón como un bálsamo. (p.153)

When Fedina is later taken to the brothel, she is already a being dissociated from herself, living only in the tomb-like reality of her own making:

Fedina no se defendió de aquellos manipuleos deshonestos, contentándose con apretar los párpados y cerrar los labios para librar su ceguera y su mutismo de tumba amenazados, no sin oprimir contra su oscuridad y su silencio, exprimiéndolo, el despojo de su hijo, que arrullaba todavía como un niño dormido. (p.156)

Miguel displays similar metaphysical courage in the face of his captor Farfán. In many ways he has vanquished death by communicating life in his love for and union with Camila. Their relationship is associated with the regenerative forces of nature, and the mythical world underlying this. 'El baile de Tohil,' for instance, has a strange liberating effect at the same time as it prefigures Miguel's death and this directly parallels the effects of his love for Camila. For at the same time as it liberates him personally, and causes his own spiritual revolution, it also damns him in the eyes of the President and triggers his downfall.

But although the President may defeat Miguel, he cannot defeat the natural, regenerative forces which transcend his bloody reality and which inhabit, for example, Camila and her new-born child. Asturias' emphasis on this "other" reality in no way detracts from the need to struggle against the oppression and brutality of the dictatorship. As we are told of Camila's rebirth through her child, so we are told of the sickening conditions in which Miguel is left to rot, where the only human warmth - "calor de huelgo humano" (p.291) - lies in the shit which builds up in the bucket as it is passed from one prisoner to the next. El Señor Presidente, then, is a vivid indictment of brutality and repression and urges political protest and change. It prepares us for a tradition of political literature which articulates both the revolutionary idealism in the Americas and the inner psychical revolution that must accompany it.

As previously mentioned, Carpentier's El siglo de las luces validates Esteban's revolutionary idealism against Victor's brand of practical realism. Esteban feels the apocalyptic impulse behind the French Revolution:

Esta Revolución había respondido, ciertamente, a un oscuro impulso milenarista, desembocando en la aventura más ambiciosa del ser humano. (pp.266-267)

and although he watches it self-destruct, he does not lose faith in the future possibility of a triumphant historical revolution:

Esta vez la revolución ha fracasado. Acaso la próxima sea la buena. (p.267)

But what Esteban learns above all is the importance of inner psychical change:

El ser humano sólo podrá ser iluminado mediante el desarrollo de las facultades divinas dormidas en él por el predominio de la materia . . . (p.267)

In this way, Sofía achieves a personal revolution in her sexual awakening and fulfilment. Chapter 44 begins:

Sofía, descubría, maravillada, el mundo de su propio sensualidad.

It is a discovery which takes her through a radical psychical exploration

Vuelto a sus raíces, el lenguaje de los amantes regresaba a la palabra desnuda, al balbuceo de una palabra anterior a toda poesía . . . (p.321)

She discovers her own essence through a new appreciation of "la esencia original de los mitos," (p.323) and Carpentier's description reaches new heights as he traces the mythical, transcendent fusion of the lovers with nature:

Acoplábanse de tal modo los ritmos físicos a los ritmos de la creación, que bastaba una lluvia repentina, un florecer de plantas en la noche, un cambio en los rumbos de la brisa, que brotara el deseo en amanecer o en crepúsculo, para que los cuerpos tuviesen la impresión de encontrarse en un clima nuevo, donde el abrazo remozaba las iluminaciones del primer encuentro. (p.322)

Finally, Sofía "hubiese querido que todos participaran de su gran dicha interior, de su contento, de su soberana calma." (p.322) And it is Esteban who, through a prolonged and sensuous, visionary journey into nature (ch.24), also achieves this supreme calm. He, like Sofía, comes to realize "la ambigüedad formal de cosas que participaban de varias esencias," (p.182) and achieves an almost Keatsian appreciation of a fine verisimilitude:

Contemplando un caracol - uno solo - pensaba Esteban en la presencia de la Espiral durante milenios, ante la cotidiana mirada de pueblos pescadores, aún incapaces de entenderla ni de percibir, siquiera, la realidad de su presencia. (p.184)

It is his own entry into such inner, transcendent reality that brings him peace and joy comparable to that of Sofía:

¿Qué signo, qué mensaje, qué advertencia, en los rizos de la achicoria, el alfabeto de los musgos, la geometría de la pomarrosa? Mirar un caracol. Uno solo. Te déum. (p.184)

This journey back into nature and into a psychical haven is associated in the novel with a search for roots, and it is this preoccupation which also distinguishes revolutionary struggle and revolutionary literature in the Americas from that of the Soviet Union. In his poem 'El Apellido' Nicolás Guillén looks back to his own African roots:

¿no veis estos tambores en mis ojos?  
¿no veis estos tambores tensos y golpeados  
con dos lagrimas secas?<sup>42</sup>

and expresses the need to rediscover and reintegrate with those roots if psychical harmony is to be achieved:

De algún país ardiente, perforado  
por la gran flecha ecuatorial,  
sé que vendrán lejanos primos,  
remota angustia mía disparada en el viento;  
sé que vendrán pedazos de mis venas,  
sangre remota mía,  
con duro pie aplastando las hierbas asustadas;  
sé que vendrán hombres de vidas verdes,  
remota selva mía,  
con su dolor abierto en cruz y el pecho rojo en llamas.<sup>43</sup>

But this return to psychical and historical roots is not simply an endeavour to exorcise a legacy of pain and injustice. The fact of having something to return to is itself positive. In El siglo de las luces the slaves return to the life of their ancestors in order to escape the wrath of the white man:

Más allá de aquel torrente, de aquella montaña vestida de cascadas, empezaría el Africa nuevamente; se regresaría a los idiomas olvidados, a los ritos de circuncisión, a la adoración de los Dioses Primeros, anteriores a los Dioses recientes del cristianismo. (p.330)

And Esteban feels one of the downfalls of the French Revolution is that it does not have its own gods to return to:

. . . pasó bruscamente a pensar que la debilidad de la Revolución, que tanto atronaba el mundo con las voces de un nuevo Dios Irae, estaba en su ausencia de dioses válidos. (p.229)

But the Americas have an abundance of historical and spiritual roots that have been stifled by generations of oppressors, and which revolutionary movements aim to recover. In Guatemala, for instance, the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) has stated:

El dominio de los grandes ricos es la causa principal de la opresión cultural y la discriminación que sufre en Guatemala la población indígena . . . La segunda condición para garantizar la igualdad [the first is political participation] es respetar la cultura y reconocer el derecho que tiene la población indígena a mantener su identidad. El desarrollo de una cultura que recoja y integre las raíces históricas de nuestro pueblo es uno de los grandes objetivos de la revolución.<sup>44</sup>

The historical roots here, the myths and beliefs of the Maya and Quiché people, far transcend linear realities, the "historically concrete depiction of reality" <sup>45</sup> privileged under socialist realism and give rise to a determinedly rigorous deconstruction of such outward reality in novels like Miguel Angel Asturias' Hombres de maíz.

This attempt to recover and reintegrate historical and spiritual roots, as well as the need to respond to immediate political realities, is the context in which García Márquez has defined his

own position in relation to a literature of commitment. Himself a committed socialist, his early stories and first novel are typical of the lyrical, metaphorical and psychical explorations for which he later became famous. After La hojarasca, however, García Márquez published a series of novels and short stories that were much more realistic in form, and he explains this as a direct response to the political reality of Colombia and the responsibility he felt to denounce repression:

Cuando yo escribí La hojarasca tenía ya la convicción de que toda buena novela debía ser una transposición poética de la realidad. Pero aquel libro, como recuerdas, apareció en momentos en que Colombia vivía una época de persecuciones políticas sangrientas, y mis amigos militantes me crearon un terrible complejo de culpa. "Es una novela que no denuncia, que no desenmascara nada," me dijeron. El concepto lo veo hoy muy simplista y equivocado, pero en aquel momento me llevó a pensar que yo debía ocuparme de la realidad inmediata del país, apartándome un poco de mis ideas literarias iniciales . . .<sup>46</sup>

In retrospect, García Márquez believes this to be too simplistic a response to political repression and too limited a view of the relationship between art and revolutionary change:

El coronel no tiene quien le escriba, La mala hora, y muchos cuentos de Los funerales de la Mamá Grande son libros inspirados en la realidad de Colombia, y su estructura racionalista está determinada por la naturaleza del tema. No me arrepiento de haberlos escrito, pero constituyen un tipo de literatura premeditada, que ofrece una visión un tanto estática y excluyente de la realidad. Por buenos o malos que parezcan, son libros que acaban en la última página.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the limitations of realism, however, the tension García Márquez reveals, between a personal aesthetic vision and a responsibility to intervene politically, can be detected in the texts themselves.

In El coronel no tiene quien le escriba and La mala hora language and technique are deliberately concise, sober, dominated by a need to be effective, similar to journalism. The brief reference to the distant, mythical world of Macondo in La mala hora:

El párroco que me sucedió en Macondo - dijo el padre Angel -  
Tenía cien años.<sup>48</sup>

emphasizes the lack of any poetic, transcendent life in this story. Instead, García Márquez attempts to convey the tensions and the turmoil surrounding a small Colombian town during the period of 'la violencia.' But although La mala hora constantly refers to a background of violence:

Está loco - dijo entonces - Hace año y medio le desbarataron la cabeza a culatazos al personero, y ahora anda buscando un candidato para regalarle el puesto. (p.80)

it is not in the forefront. Despite intending to write swift moving, immediate prose, García Márquez remains a writer in slow motion, primarily focusing on psychological motivation and confrontations. He is fascinated, for instance, by the tension that exists between the mayor and the dentist and the one sentence:

Sus miradas se encontraron por primera vez. (p.73)

is expanded into its own story in the collection entitled Los funerales de la Mamá Grande. Even when, in La mala hora, the tensions finally erupt into another period of violently imposed repression, the cause of the eruption is extremely ambiguous and the reader almost feels sympathy for the mayor in his efforts to preserve peace. Though urged on by a responsibility to denounce repression, then, García Márquez succeeds instead in exploring the pressures on the government functionaries and refrains from outright condemnation.

In the end, these novels reveal to us the limitations of too one-sided a political position. Political protest often goes for the simplest solutions, sanctifying the oppressed and every aspect of their actions, making the slightest criticism a criminal sacrilege. In particular, it becomes quite inconceivable that the oppressed might themselves be oppressing others. Elisabeth Burgos-Debray draws our attention to this in her introduction to Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú:



Ella [Rigoberta] lucha contra el olvido, y para hacernos ver lo que los latinoamericanos siempre hemos rehusado ver. Porque incluso si siempre hemos estado prestos a denunciar las relaciones de desigualdad que América del Norte mantiene con nosotros, jamás hemos tenido la idea de reconocer que también nosotros somos opresores, y que mantenemos relaciones que pueden calificarse cómodamente de *coloniales*. Sin temor a exagerar, podemos afirmar, que existe, sobre todo en los países con gran población india, un colonialismo interno que se ejerce en detrimento de las poblaciones autóctonas. La facilidad con la cual la América del Norte ejerce su poder sobre la llamada América Latina, se debe en gran parte a la complicidad que le ofrece la existencia de ese colonialismo interno, los países de América Latina, no se convertirán en naciones soberanas y por consiguiente serán vulnerables.<sup>49</sup>

This cycle of oppression, where the oppressed become the oppressors and vice versa, is central to the historical dramas of Asturias and Carpentier. In El reino de este mundo, for instance, Carpentier reconstructs events in Haiti at the turn of the eighteenth century where a successful, and then self-destructive, black slave rebellion reveals the self-corrupting nature of power. Despite overthrowing French colonial rule, the novel shows that in perpetuating its system of oppressive domination, the black rebel, Henri Christophe, remains its victim. For Carpentier, the novel should always confront and explore such dialectical struggles rather than reinforce stases of opposition that are created by ideological rhetoric. As Kundera also says in his contribution to They Shoot Writers. Don't They?:

Ideology wants to convince you that its truth is absolute. A novel shows you that everything is relative. Ideology is a school of intolerance. A novel teaches you tolerance and understanding. The more ideological our century becomes, the more anachronistic is the novel. But the more anachronistic it gets, the more we need it. Today, when politics have become a religion, I see the novel as one of the last forms of atheism.<sup>50</sup>

But this is not to say that the novel is anarchic or without a firm moral code. The physical and moral crimes of a character like Henri Christophe are not glossed over in any way and any identification with him only forces us to question our own share in the cycle of those crimes.

García Márquez' El otoño del patriarca is a rather less successful attempt at this kind of novel and unlike the previous novels referred to seems to fall uneasily between the genres of political protest and poetic exploration. Like El Señor Presidente it is a study of a corrupt and brutal dictatorship and also evokes the magical and mythical forces of nature beyond the control of the physical laws of outward reality. García Márquez' dictator, however, is himself a part of these other forces and evokes mixed and complex reactions.

Throughout El otoño reality is a fragile construct and people have learnt to be suspicious of appearances:

. . . pero sabíamos que ninguna evidencia de su muerte era terminante, pues siempre había otra verdad detrás de la verdad.<sup>51</sup>

But this "other" truth is not the transcendent reality of Asturias or Carpentier, but yet another facet of the dictator's powers - powers which are presented as magical:

. . . él señalara con el dedo a los árboles que debían dar frutos y a los animales que debían crecer y a los hombres que debían prosperar, y había ordenado que quitaran la lluvia de donde estorbaba las cosechas y la pusieran entierra de sequía, y así había sido, señor, yo lo he visto . . . (pp.118-119)

But having, on the one hand, drawn a mythical, omnipotent figure, García Márquez inclines on the other to describe a human, all too human, patriarch who might have acted better if he'd been given more of a chance. The familiar refrain "esta gente me quiere" has a sad quality and evokes sympathy for the patriarch as do the revelations of his comic but endearing mother:

Benedición Alvarado . . . exclamó en voz alta ante el cuerpo diplomático en pleno que si yo hubiera sabido que mi hijo iba a ser presidente de la república lo hubiera mandado a la escuela, señor . . . (p.67)

Where the horrors of the patriarch's dictatorship are vividly recounted the effect is considerably lessened through the reader's already established mental alliance with the dictator. This

dialectic between sympathy for and condemnation of the dictator is reflected in the writing itself. The incident retold on p.76 is typical of García Márquez' style, where there is a steady progression of horror and cruelty:

. . . llorando de dolor, llorando de rabia, hasta que se encontró consigo mismo vomitando de humillación en cuatro patas con la cabeza metida en los vapores fétidos del excusado

which is then suddenly disrupted, and the effect negated, by a contradictory image:

. . . y lo clavó con una lanza llanera como una mariposa . . .

The most disturbing example of this uneasy balance is the description of the aged dictator's seduction of young schoolgirls. Here the conflicting images exist simultaneously:

. . . y me acostó en el heno perfumado de orines rancios . . .  
(p.281)

and we are given a picture of perversion which would be completely gross except that it is presented through an erotic language which seems determined to cast a tenderness and beauty over the whole sordid affair:

. . . me metía los dedos por el borde de los bragas, se olía los dedos, me los hacía oler, siente, me decía, es tu olor, no volví a necesitar los caramelos del embajador Baldrich para que yo me metiera por las claraboyas del establo a vivir las horas felices de mi pubertad con aquel hombre de corazón sano y triste que me esparaba sentado en el heno con una bolsa de cosas de comer, enjugaba con pan mis primeras salsas de adolescente . . .  
(p.281)

El otoño del patriarca has been described as "a kind of maze from which the reader instinctively wants to escape,"<sup>52</sup> but it is not the dictatorship the reader wants to escape but the fact of being manipulated into sympathizing with the dictator's perversion and brutality. As Gerald Martin protests:

It is hard to bear the thought that Chile's Pinochet will some day have a sympathetic, if supercilious book written about him to demonstrate that he was really the alienated one and not his tortured, exiled or murdered victims. Yet this is precisely what García Márquez appears to be suggesting with his portrait of an elephantine dictator condemned to solitude and absurdity.

Satire is the last thing needed to deal with Latin American tyranny . . . and fantasy seems inevitably trivial in the face of contemporary horrors. The brutal fact is that there is nothing absurd about Pinochet.<sup>53</sup>

The method adopted by García Márquez in El otoño does more to sustain the illusions of a brutal dictator than to undermine them. The novel is, in the end, too satisfied with its own circular patterns and virtuosic contrivances to press against them. But as the works by Asturias and Carpentier have already shown, the art of fantasy need not be a trivial response to contemporary horrors. García Márquez uses it more successfully in other novels to symbolize the political situation of the continent and to react against it. At one point in Cien años de soledad a strike in a North American banana plantation is violently crushed and the corpses of the strikers are whisked away by train, never to be seen again. Yet the citizens of Macondo are told that the strike was amicably settled. It is then subsequently asserted in school textbooks not only that the strike never took place but that the banana plantation never existed. Here we have an important context in which the presence of 'fantasy' in the fiction of the region can be understood. For where governments and foreign companies can literally alter reality, who can say what is real any longer? And is not the reality of Colombia more fantastic (certainly more gruesome) than any legend?

This mixture of fantasy and reality is also central to Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children and Shame and, like García Márquez, Rushdie has been frustrated at the inability of some critics to recognise the political nature of this fantasy:

. . . it will be very easy when reading *Shame*, as it was for many people when reading *Midnight's Children*, to forget that it's about a real place. Many people, especially in the West, who read *Midnight's Children*, talked about it as a fantasy novel. By and large, nobody in India talks about it as a fantasy novel; they talk about it as a novel of history and politics. And memory, which is the other thing that it is

essentially about. With this book too, I've already heard in England a professor of English literature saying on the radio that although this appears to be a political novel on the surface, it's not really a political novel; in fact the political elements are, apparently, quite subsidiary. So I'd like to say that *Shame* is a political novel and that behind the fantasized or the mythologized country in the book there is a real country, and behind the dictators in the book there are real dictators.<sup>54</sup>

Like many Latin American writers, Rushdie stresses that the historical fact of colonialism inevitably leads to a hybridization of culture, so that the post-colonial writer has a number of traditions - oral as well as written, myth as well as realism - through which to articulate a response to contemporary political reality. This focus on hybridity has not, however, been the dominant concern of all post-colonial literary theories and in order to understand the pressures on the Caribbean writer, we must first consider the influence of African critics and their stress on the issue of social commitment in literature.

In the 1950s and 1960s African literary theory was concerned to emphasize the political function of the writer in post-colonial societies. Chinua Achebe's essay 'The Novelist as Teacher' (1965) was central to this:

The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done. In fact he should march right in front . . . I for one would not wish to be excused. I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past - with all its imperfections - was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them. Perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure art. But who cares? Art is important and so is education of the kind I have in mind.<sup>55</sup>

The insistence on the social role of the African artist and the denial of a European preoccupation with individual experience, led to claims for a unique African aesthetic and a rejection of 'universal' readings by European and North American critics:

I should like to see the word 'universal' banned altogether from discussions of African literature until such a time as people

cease to use it as a synonym for the narrow self-serving parochialism of Europe.<sup>56</sup>

But while the recovery of an African social context was a necessary intervention into Eurocentric readings of African fiction, the stress on an 'authentic' African tradition by critics such as Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike led to a narrowing of the relationship between content and form, in which the simplicity and directness of Achebe was praised and the language and imagery of Soyinka severely censored.<sup>57</sup>

Although Soyinka's reply in his article 'Neo-Tarzanism: the Poetics of Pseudo-Tradition' (1975) was influential in highlighting the reductionism implicit in Chinweizu and others' view of African reality and African traditional literature,<sup>58</sup> it was their emphasis on social realism as the most effective form for the politically committed writer that prevailed in the early literary development of the Caribbean. As a result of this, Harris has said,<sup>59</sup> Caribbean writers were expected to write novels that were neo-Dickensian, a form which, ironically, was then easily assimilated into a Eurocentric tradition. Harris' reaction to this pressure of commitment was twofold: a) his belief that the racially mixed populations of the Caribbean, and Guyana in particular, offer unique possibilities for cross-cultural creativity and philosophy unavailable to monocultural societies, or to those which aspire to monoculturalism and b) his belief that a protest literature that only responds to historical reality will be unable to articulate these possibilities. As he says in 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas':

The journey across the Atlantic for the forebears of West Indian man involved a new kind of space - inarticulate as this new 'spatial' character was at the time - and not simply an unbroken schedule of miles in a log book. Once we perceive this inner corrective to historical documentary and protest literature which sees the West Indies as utterly deprived, or gutted by exploitation, we begin to participate in the genuine

possibilities of original change in a people severely disadvantaged (it is true) at a certain point in time.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the confidence and promise of an earlier nationalism, the literature of the sixties and seventies in the English speaking Caribbean was essentially a literature of disillusion and despondency. The break up of the West Indian Federation in 1962 erased the wider notion of a West Indian political unit, leaving small nations for whom political independence was more a gift from the metropolis than an actively and independently worked achievement. In contrast to the idealism in Latin America at the time, where successful revolutionary change had inspired hope in the future, the aftermath of political freedom in the Caribbean was sadly ambiguous and most writers reacted sharply to the very politics of freedom. Harris is critical, however, of writers like V.S. Naipaul who seem consumed by historical determinism and fatalism. It is not the Caribbean's capacity for change and vision which he questions, but the ability of politics and protest literature to affect that change.

Harris was an associate of the intellectual elite who founded the People's Progressive Party in Guyana, many of whom went on to become Ministers in the Cheddi Jagan government. Despite a radical agenda, though, Harris believes that the very politics of protest have contributed to the stasis both in Guyana and in the wider Caribbean:

Protest in intellectual political terms (Marxist and humanitarian) continues to divide the Caribbean. Some people have said that Dr. Jagan's Marxist party in Guiana - radical and far-thinking as it once was - eventually became dominated by the self-interest of an Indian peasantry who built a wall in the face of that very 'old heritage of negro slavery' and this, in fact, is no denigration of the Indian peasantry, because they are as much trapped as any other group in the Caribbean and one feels, in the same token, that the West Indian Federation split into island fortresses who were intent on building a hard and fast wall against that very 'old heritage of slavery' within themselves and without.<sup>51</sup>

Rather than building walls, rather than defining themselves through opposition, Harris believes that the Americas must break down victor/victim stases and explore such 'old heritages,' for in them lie the source of the heterogeneous community modern man must strive to build if true revolutionary change is to be sustained.<sup>52</sup> This struggle through repressed areas of consciousness to release thresholds of capacity is as important as the outward struggle against repression and exploitation, but this is exactly what Harris feels has been ignored, even suppressed, by historians and intellectuals in the Caribbean:

What is bitterly ironic - as I have already indicated - is that present-day historians in the second half of the twentieth century - militant and critical of imperialism as they are here - have fallen victim, in another sense, to the very imperialism they appear to denounce. They have no criteria for arts of originality springing out of an age of limbo and the history they write is without an inner time.<sup>53</sup>

For Harris, novelistic form must contain this 'inner time' as well as history and, like the Latin American writers already mentioned, he believes that realism is insufficient for this function and so not an essential form for the committed writer. Aubrey Williams is also critical of intellectuals who try to impose a realistic, directly representational framework on the artist. In 'The Predicament of the Artist in the Caribbean' he says:

Now, I am worried about a prevalent conception that good art, working art, must speak, it must be narrative. I do not see the necessity for art to be narrative, in that in thinking about the past and man, art has never been 'narrative' to any great extent. I would not call primitive art in any sense directly representational or figurative. The arts of past civilisations were to a great extent non-figurative.<sup>54</sup>

Both Harris and Williams deny that their work is abstract and inaccessible, or in any way less committed to revolutionary change because they diverge from canons of realism. Though neither have taken up a direct political role, both have devoted their work to deconstructing systems of oppression and to reclaiming the



historical and spiritual roots that will sustain a capacity for renewal. This is not to suggest that political action is not necessary, but to ensure that a nation who gains political power will also have an identity with which to rule

What we may term literature of commitment in the Americas, then, is a diverse literary response to a complex reality. Many writers feel not only a responsibility to denounce repression, but also to articulate the profound psychic transformation which must accompany political change. It is this latter responsibility which primarily motivates Wilson Harris and his is an uncompromising imagination which makes few concessions to an artistic method like socialist realism. García Márquez, who is more closely involved in direct political action, has responded to the immediate realities of a history and legacy of exploitation and savagery, while all the time emphasizing that this is not the only reality in the Americas. In his Nobel prize winning speech of 1982 García Márquez reminds us of the devastation the Americas continue to suffer:

De Chile, país de tradiciones hospitalarias, han huido un millón de personas: el 10 por ciento de su población. El Uruguay, una nación minúscula de dos y medio millones de habitantes que se consideraba como el país más civilizado del continente, ha perdido en el destierro a uno de cada cinco ciudadanos. La guerra civil en El Salvador ha causado desde 1979 casi un refugiado cada 20 minutos. El país que se pudiera hacer con todos los exiliados y emigrados forzosos de América Latina, tendría una población más numerosa que la de Noruega.<sup>15</sup>

But more than a catalogue of devastation, García Márquez reminds us that the history of the Americas is also "una aventura de la imaginación," beginning with the first Chroniclers' vision of the land and the mysteries and legends of the people they encountered. Only when our sense of history has reached back into this period, to the birth of their mestizo identity, will we gain a more complete picture of the complex reality which inspires the work of both Harris and García Márquez.

(c) Discovery and Conquest

There had been many important centres of civilisation in the Americas, and various expeditions to them by traders and explorers from other continents, before Columbus' landing in 1492 and the waves of Conquistadores that followed. But it was in the impact between the European and the Amerindian that the America of today was born. The Conquistadores annihilated a highly sophisticated native society and some writers and historians have commented metaphorically that, being born of a rape, America now lives torn to pieces.<sup>66</sup> But the nature of the collision between Amerindian and Conquistador is both more complex and more positive than this. At the entrance to the excavated ruins of the temples of Tlatelolco in Mexico City, an inscription carved in stone reads: "On the thirteenth day of August of 1521, heroically defended by Cuauhtemoc, Tlatelolco fell to Hernán Cortés. This was neither a victory nor defeat. It was the anguished birth of the Mestizo nation that is the Mexico of today."<sup>67</sup> Writers like Harris and García Márquez recognise the creative potential of a Mestizo nation that can see through waves of conquest and across cultural boundaries. They are the descendants of European Conquistadores as well as native Amerindians and to deny the culture of either would be to ignore a major part of themselves. For the Conquistador, the collision with the Amerindian forced a confrontation with the *other*, which, as Todorov points out, also became a discovery of *self*.<sup>68</sup> This was not an easy discovery, however, and many were at first reluctant to accept the reality of what they had found.

A whole generation of explorers and geographers tried, by any arguments they could find, to fit America-to-be into the accepted pattern of the world. To understand that a new, separate land mass of vast and unknown extent must be added to the map of the world would be a contradiction of accepted geographical authority, a severe commercial disappointment and, moreover, a challenge to the faith. The implications were profoundly disturbing and many informed Europeans were slow to accept them. Columbus, in particular, was unable to shake off the illusions of his own preconceived system. Having assumed that the island of Hispaniola was in fact Japan, the Chipangu of Marco Polo, he was compelled to accept Cuba as the Asiatic mainland. His diaries relate a series of desperate searches for confirmation of this fact. He sent parrots over to Spain as proof that he had reached India, as this was believed at the time to be their origin. On his second voyage he forced his officers and crew to swear under heavy penalties that they were beyond any doubt on the mainland of Asia. But Columbus was, in the end, a victim of his own inability to recognise a new reality. Ending destitute and ignored, he did not even have his name bestowed on the lands he gave to Spain. This honour fell to a scholarly Italian, Amerigo Vespucci, who wrote after one of the voyages in which he took part: "I have found, in these southern lands, a continent . . . One can, with good reason, name it the New World."<sup>es</sup> Amerigo's words were circulated in Europe long before the publication of Columbus' diaries. In 1507 a German cartographer published a map whereon the word 'America' appeared. Columbus discovered; but he did not know what he had found.

Columbus' courage, however, should not be underestimated. For all his faith in his mission, he could not be certain that the Abyss - and therefore his fall into it - did not lie on the other side of

the ocean; or again, that this westward voyage was not the descent of a long downward slope which it would afterwards be impossible to reascend; in short, that his return was at all likely. His diaries are also an invaluable record of an attempt to grasp the complex reality of the Americas. García Márquez has called them the first work of magical literature to be produced in the Caribbean.<sup>70</sup> This is because, on the one hand, Columbus describes not what he sees, but what he thinks he sees. Travellers' Tales such as those collected by Sir John Mandeville enjoyed wide credit in the later Middle Ages and many expected that if the other hemisphere were ever to be explored, it would be peopled not by men but by monstrous beings. When America had been discovered there was a certain reluctance to admit that its inhabitants were human and an ever present fear or hope that sooner or later monsters would be found. The strength of Columbus' belief permitted him to find Cyclopes and mermaids, Amazons and men with tails. Fact and fiction become irrevocably intertwined:

Entendió también que lexos de allí avía hombres de un ojo y otros con hocicos de perros que comían los hombres, y que en tomando uno lo degollavan y le bevían la sangre y le cortavan su natura.<sup>71</sup>

But these descriptions are less the product of Columbus' fantasies than the insufficiency of his frames of reference to fully comprehend the new world before him. He is genuinely fascinated by the natural aspects of the land and begins by comparing its abundance and beauty with "el mes de Mayo en el Andalucía." But Spanish idylls soon become insufficient for comparison and Columbus is constantly frustrated by the inability of language itself to convey the reality before him:

Dize tantas y tales cosas de la fertilidad y hermosura y altura d'estas islas que halló en este puerto, que dize a los Reyes que no se maravillén de encaraçellas tanto, porque les çertifica que cree que no dize la çentessima parte: algunas d'ellas que pareçia que llegan al çielo y hechas como puntas de diamantes;

otras que sobre su gran altura tienen ençima como una mesa, y al pie d'ellas fondo grandissimo, que podrá llegar a ellas una grandissima carraca, todas llenas de arboledas y sin peñas.<sup>72</sup>

Each excursion brings ever more incredible sights and Columbus can only describe it all as "maravilla." By his third voyage Columbus is convinced that America must be the Earthly Paradise and devotes a section of his diary to proving this.<sup>73</sup> The fifteenth century mind thought of the Garden of Eden etc. as a physical place and many others beside Columbus believed themselves to be in this Earthly Paradise on reaching the Americas.

Columbus' diaries, then, can be described as the first work of magical literature in the Caribbean both because they are a product of his own illusions and because they are an attempt to describe a genuinely new and magical place. With little experience, and little education, Columbus believed the success of his voyage owed more to divine inspiration than to man's wisdom. Having been bestowed one miracle he was prepared for more and although he constantly reassured the Spanish monarchs that he was looking for gold, it was clearly the miracle of the new lands and people that were his prime interest. The Diario del Primer Viaje (1492) communicates an incredible enthusiasm, optimism, and wonder and gives a very positive view of the native societies. But like many writers since, Columbus discovered that the Americas could be as cruel and hostile as they were wondrous. The language of the Relación del Cuarto Viaje (1503) is still visionary but steeped in sorrow and despair. Columbus now felt that the elements were so set against him that ". . . parecía que el mundo se ensolvía."<sup>74</sup> Becoming increasingly isolated and destitute, this later diary begins to sound like a desperate invention as Columbus makes exaggerated claims to gold in the rivers and mines full of gold and other precious metals. In Columbus' attempt to understand the reality of the new lands America

is genuinely admired and appreciated, but ultimately misunderstood and fictionalised.

The Conquistadores encountered lands which seemed even more magical and fantastical than those described by Columbus. The letters of Hernán Cortés, so detached and methodical in outlining his tactics and decisions through various campaigns, become suddenly heightened on first sight of the Aztec civilization:

La ciudad es tan grande y de tanta admiración, que aunque mucho de lo que della podría decir deje, lo poco que diré creo es casi increíble . . . <sup>75</sup>

Cortés met a highly sophisticated society which so disturbed his preconceptions that it seemed like an illusion, a marvellous fantasy which he was unable to convey in words:

Porque para dar cuenta, muy poderoso señor, a vuestra real excelencia de la grandeza, extrañas, y maravillosas cosas desta gran ciudad de Temixtitán, y del señorío y servicio deste Mutezuma, señor della, y de los ritos y costumbres que esta gente tiene, y de la orden que en la gobernación, así desta ciudad como de las otras que eran deste señor, sería menester mucho tiempo y ser muchos relatores y muy expertos: no podré yo decir de cien partes una de las que dellas se podrían decir; mas como pudiere, diré algunas cosas de las que vi, que, aunque mal dichas, bien sé que serán de tanta admiración que no se podrán creer, porque los que acá con nuestros propios ojos las vemos no las podemos con el endendimiento comprehender. <sup>76</sup>

Like Columbus, Cortés attempted to describe this new and unfamiliar reality and found language itself unequal to the task:

. . . y entre estas mezquitas hay una, que es la principal, que no hay lengua humana que sepa explicar la grandeza y particularidades della; . . . <sup>77</sup>

Bernal Díaz, the more eloquent chronicler of the same campaign, saw this new reality in images borrowed from the novels of chivalry:

. . . decíamos que parecía a las cosas y encantamiento que cuentan en el libro de Amadís, por las grandes torres y cues y edificios que tenían dentro en el agua, y todas de cal y canto; y aun algunos de nuestros soldados decían que si aquello que aquí sí era entre sueños. Y no es de maravillar que yo aquí lo escriba desta manera, porque hay que ponderar mucho en ello, que no sé cómo lo cuente, ver cosas nunca oídas ni vistas y aun soñadas, como vimos. <sup>78</sup>

America was truly the New World and demanded a new language and radically new perspective before it could be fully comprehended.

But to the natives, the Conquistadores were newcomers to an old-established world and it was they that brought magical, fantastical things that disturbed a harmonious framework. Columbus' first exchanges with the native Amerindians had already shown that fantasy was a question of cultural assumptions. He was amazed at the interest they showed in the little glass beads he gave them, while he himself was awestruck by the gold and other 'precious' metals he received in return. Bernal Diaz never questions his assumption that all men alike covet gold and the natives watched in wonder as the Spaniards fought for possession of this metal. Nevertheless, the natives viewed the Conquistadores as god-like, supernatural beings at first. Cortés arrived in the same year that, according to the Aztec calendar, the god, and exiled chief, Quetzalcoatl, was to return. The idea that the Aztecs simply kneeled down before their god-like ruler, and were already conquered before they realised their error, is one of the many 'myths' of this period. Even the Chronicles, heavily biased towards the Spaniards as they are, give the Aztecs more credit than this. But it is true that Cortés bore a resemblance to the revered leader, Quetzalcoatl, and arrived with horses and cannon and other implements which seemed magical to the natives. Cortés' ability to exploit this cultural difference was a major factor in the success of his campaign. The natives, for instance, believed the mariners' chart and compass to be magical and thought that Cortés knew all things through them. Cortés encourages this belief:

. . . yo también les hice entender que así era la verdad y que en aquella aguja y carta de marear vía yo y sabía y se me descubrían todas las cosas.<sup>72</sup>

Bernal Diaz describes how Cortés was able to capitalize on the natives' ignorance of cannon, telling them that if they did not obey:

. . . que soltará de aquellos tepustles que los maten (al hierro llaman en su lengua tepustle), que aun por lo pasado que han hecho en darnos guerra están enojados algunos dellos. Entonces secretamente mandó poner fuego a la bombardas que estaba cebada, e dio tan buen trueno y recio como era menester; iba la pelota zumbando por los montes, que, como en aquel instante era mediodía e hacia calma, llevaba gran ruido, y los caciques se espantaron de la oír; y como no habian visto cosa como aquella, creyeron que era verdad lo que Cortés les dijo . . . <sup>so</sup>

Cortés staged similar displays with horses and gunfire, all of which amazed the natives and convinced them that the Conquistadores must be *Teules*, literally gods. Having gained this reputation, the conquistadores had to take pains to maintain their god-like status:

. . . y luego nos fuimos a nuestro real muy contentos y dando muchas gracias a Dios, y enterramos *los muertos* en una de aquellas casas que tenían hechas en los soterrafios, porque no viesen los indios que éramos mortales, sino que creyesen que éramos teules, como ellos decían; y derrocamos mucha tierra encima de la casa porque no oliesen los cuerpos . . . <sup>si</sup>

History often records that Montezuma, the Aztec leader, was entirely convinced by these stories and believed that Quetzalcoatl had returned to claim his throne. Awaiting Cortés' advance with fear and trepidation, he is described as a weak and indecisive man who relied on the advice of his priests rather than the realities of conquest which lay around him. But the reasons for the conquest were complex. Many Nahuatl-speaking peoples did not form part of the Aztec Empire and, even if they had, as part of a conquered nation, would not have identified themselves with the people of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Some welcomed the arrival of the Conquistadores and willingly joined them in battle against the Aztecs, imagining that the demise of the Aztec Empire would mean the demise of tyranny and oppression. Also, despite the order and efficiency which Cortés saw and admired, the Aztec government was not as strong as it had been. A number of ill omens darkened the



last years of Montezuma's reign and a feeling of consternation hung over Mexico in the years immediately preceding the arrival of Cortés. For twenty seven years the Spaniards had been exploring different parts of the Caribbean, Central America, Yucatán and Tabasco. Florida had been visited in 1513 and the Pacific Ocean discovered in the same year. The newcomers had fought and traded with Caribs, Mayas, Nahuas and other native peoples who had contact, directly or indirectly, with the Aztecs. All of this upheaval exerted a powerful unsettling influence upon the ruling class in Tenochtitlan.

Nevertheless, Montezuma impressed the Spaniards who met him with his dignity and strength. His meeting with Cortés is described by Bernal Díaz as a match of intellects and one of mutual respect. In Montezuma's words to Cortés we have the first real meeting of perspectives between Amerindian and Conquistador, where the illusion of the *other* disappears and a sense of *self* enhanced:

'Malinche, bien sé que te han dicho esos de Tlascala, con quién tanta amistad habéis tomado, que yo: que soy como dios o teule, que cuanto hay en mis casas es todo oro e plata y piedras ricas; bien tengo conocido que como sois entendidos, y que no lo creíais y lo teníais por burla, lo que ahora, señor Malinche, veis: mi cuerpo de hueso y carne como los vuestros, mis casas y palacios de piedra y madera y cal; de ser yo gran rey, sí soy, y tener riquezas de mis antecesores, sí tengo; mas no las locuras y mentiras que de mí os han dicho; así que también lo tendréis por burla, como yo tengo lo de vuestros truenos y relámpagos.'<sup>82</sup>

Cortés is known as Malinche after the native woman who acted as his translator. The people of the Aztec Empire always referred to him by this name as it was through her that they knew him. Bernal Díaz describes how, because Doña Marina was always with him, Cortés was given the name of 'Marina's Captain,' which was shortened to Malinche. The name Malinche, then, refers both to Cortés and to his female translator and the fact that he is named *through* her

emphasizes the importance of her role in enabling this meeting of perspectives.

Like Montezuma, however, La Malinche has emerged in history as another 'mythical' figure and is known in popular culture as the treacherous woman who sold her own people to the Spaniards. In fact, as Bernal Díaz relates in a chapter devoted to telling her story,<sup>33</sup> it was La Malinche who was herself repeatedly sold between different native cultures. By the time she was 'given' to Cortés as a gift she had mastered various languages and proved indispensable to the Spaniards. At Cortés' side she found a role that would ensure her survival and influence and her courage was more than a match for the ambitions of the Conquistadores. As history reassesses the nature of the impact between Amerindian and Conquistador, and sees through narrow victor/victim equations, the figure of La Malinche will be recognised as more complex and essentially more dialectical than the current stereotype gives her credit.

Through Montezuma and La Malinche, Cortés was forced to identify with, and admire, a 'barbarian' civilization, though in the end he did not hesitate to destroy the splendour which he had devoted pages trying to convey. Despite the destruction of the Aztec Empire, however, America remained very much a magical and fantastical land that stretched the European's concept of reality. In his book Problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias Juan de Cárdenas attempts to explain the many strange and perplexing phenomena of the Americas. He is aware that many of the things he knows to be real will still seem unbelievable to those unfamiliar with the New World: ". . . menos creerán lo que todos en las Indias sabemos,"<sup>34</sup> and he is still himself in awe of many of its natural wonders:

Si los hombres se admiran de ver temblar y estremecer la tierra  
(por ser el terremoto uno de los terribles y espantosos efectos

de naturaleza), con cuánto mayor razón se deven admirar cuando vean un monte lançar de sí llamas de fuego y espesas nubes de humo y ceniza, y esto a vezes con tanta furia e ímpetu que verdaderamente parecen estar demonios dentro del monte o bolcán.<sup>86</sup>

His descriptions of sudden monsoons and climatic aberrations, hallucinogenic drugs, rivers and fountains that turn everything thrown into them into stone, read like a mixture of fantasy and fact to us now, but at the time it all seemed hugely fantastical. Some seemingly 'fantastic' things are now explicable as scientific truths, yet we still deem those things beyond scientific proof as 'fantasy.' Modern, rational man has no humility in the face of Nature or natural wonders outside the realms of man's reason. The religious, pre-scientific mind of the European explorers, however, was more receptive to the new reality of the Americas and Cárdenas reveals an ability to enter into the natural world of the Amerindians. He learns not to dismiss the natives' claims that certain herbs and drugs have magical powers:

. . . aunque muchos afirman que no la ay y que es desatino esto de virtud occulta, vemos por experiencia lo contrario y que realmente ay propiedades y virtudes admirables, secretas y maravillosas en yervas, piedras y animales . . .<sup>86</sup>

and his attempts to explain these special powers sound almost Jungian in their intuition of multiple personality, archetypes and collective consciousness:

El tercero efecto de las sobredichas yervas o de sus penosos humos es perturbar y desordenar las species que están en los sentidos interiores del cerebro; y perturbándolas se representan a la imaginativa . . .<sup>87</sup>

Out of the collision between Amerindia and Europe, then, a new, cross-cultural vision eventually emerged that was better able to comprehend the reality of the New World and why the term 'reality' is always problematic. For who draws the line which decides where reality ends and fantasy and magic begin? To the discoverers and Conquistadores America is a fabulous and magical place. But to the

Amerindians the sight of a horse, the sound of a cannon, the feel of a sword, all are far more fantastic than sudden monsoons or tremblings of the earth. Fantasy, then, is a question of cultural assumptions and the frontier between fantasy and reality is situated differently according to one's environment. In a continent where the isolated Amerindian can still survive not far from the vast metropolis, it is neither easy nor desirable to define on a continental scale what is 'real.' Like the first Chroniclers, contemporary Latin American and Caribbean writers have the problem of finding a language and narrative form that will transcend narrow cultural differences and simplistic visions of reality so that literature might begin to correspond to the complexity and diversity of the cross-cultural American consciousness.

(d) Limitations of Realism

The novel of classical realism has been seen as the characteristic genre of the triumphant Western bourgeoisie that consolidated the European empire following the voyages of conquest. As Wilson Harris points out in Tradition the Writer and Society, the rise of the novel in its conventional and historical mould coincides in Europe with states of society which were involved in consolidating their class and other vested interests. As a result 'character' in the novel rests more or less on the self-sufficient individual - on elements of 'persuasion' rather than 'dialogue' or 'dialectic':

The novel of persuasion rests on grounds of apparent common sense: a certain 'selection' is made by the writer, the selection of items, manners, uniform conversation, historical situations, etc, all lending themselves to build and present an individual span of life which yields self-conscious and fashionable judgements, self-conscious and fashionable moralities. The tension which emerges is the tension of individuals - great or small - on an accepted plane of society we are persuaded has an inevitable existence.<sup>82</sup>

In contrast to this ordered, inevitable existence, writers and artists of the Americas are faced with a reality which often seems fantastic, absurd, 'unreal':

The South American and the Caribbean environment as compared with the ordered environments of much of the rest of the world, appears naturally 'abstract.' It is yet, thank Heavens, not rearranged too much by the hand of man. We are losing it fast, but we are lucky to have our roots still in the earth of the Caribbean. We are still in a position to contemplate terrestrial reality. Ours is a beautiful landscape, unbelievably beautiful in some cases; but, as compared with the ordered landscapes in the countries that have been over-lived in, bizarre, unreal, incongruous.<sup>83</sup>

Harris experienced this unbelievable, terrestrial reality on his first expedition into the Guyanan interior and he felt there the same sense of wonder and inadequacy of language as the early Chroniclers:

I had penetrated 150 miles. It seemed as if one had travelled thousands and thousands of miles, and in fact had travelled to another world, as it were, because one was suddenly aware of the fantastic density of place. One was aware of one's incapacity to describe it, as though the tools of language one possessed were inadequate.<sup>30</sup>

Harris realises that his frames of reference are inadequate because they are the inheritance of an ideology of consolidation, whereas his reality is one of flux and transition. As he goes on to say in Tradition the Writer and Society: "We live in a twilight situation which half-remembers, half-forgets. As such the language of consciousness has to literally rediscover and reinform itself."<sup>31</sup> García Márquez perceives an added problem in that people would find it difficult to believe the entire fantastic reality of the Americas if it were contained in a book, but agrees that a language and form of literature must still be found that can attempt to capture that reality:

I am a realist writer because I believe that in Latin America everything is possible, everything is real. There is a technical problem in that the writer finds difficulty in transcribing real events in Latin America because no-one would believe them in a book. We live surrounded by these fantastic and extraordinary things and still some writers insist on recounting to us immediate realities of no real importance. I believe that we have to work investigating language and the technical forms of narration so that the entire fantastic reality of Latin America might form part of our books and so that Latin American literature might in fact correspond to Latin American life where the most extraordinary things happen every day . . . I believe that what we should do is to promote it as a form of reality which can give something new to universal literature.<sup>32</sup>

In search of this new form of reality, García Márquez moves away from the conventions of critical realism to a more complex, dialectical vision which takes into account that language does not simply interpret reality but is a process of knowing reality through and beyond what is already known. Whereas in El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba there are straightforward economic, social and historical explanations for the psychological motivations of each of

the characters, his later writing stresses the need to move beyond a historical narrative which merely describes a 'real' world in order to arrive at figurative meaning that will also enable explorations *into* that world. For both Harris and García Márquez it is the dialectical, not inevitable, existence of character and of society which must be rendered if the fractured American psyche is to be healed.

The novel of classical realism, however, is a novel of centres and origins, a novel of centred structures, and according to these terms mestizo America has only a shadow centre and an identity as a double. The historical interpretation of the relation of the West and the Americas as that of victor and victim, and the historian's disregard for the rich, imaginative sensibility which mestizo America has inherited from its ancestors, is related to the failure of the realist novel in portraying the reality of the Americas. An artistic form founded in clear, sense-apprehended distinctions is unable to explore the hidden and unknown spaces of a fractured consciousness and will inevitably simplify its capacity for growth. As Wilson Harris observes:

The narrow basis of realism, as an art that mirrors common-sense day or pigmented identity, tends inevitably to polarise cultures or to reinforce eclipses of otherness within legacies of conquest that rule the world. In so doing it also voids a capacity for the true marriage of like to like within a multi-cultural universe.<sup>23</sup>

The novels of both Harris and García Márquez are attempts to capture the living drama of conception, the conception of the human person rather than the ideology of the 'broken' individual, the 'fulfilment' rather than the 'consolidation' of character. Neither writer ignores the reality of history, but both believe that the oppression and fragmentation it records will be surmounted when realism gives way to a dialogical principle which reaches back into the cross-cultural heritage of the Americas:

. . . it is not that the Caribbean and Guianas are at the rim of the world like a kind of gutted monster (as V.S. Naipaul and others see it) but rather, I would suggest, that the waves of action stemming from many movements and continents since the European Renaissance have come so thick and fast that 'realism' becomes, in itself, a dead-end, and the need begins to dawn for a drama of consciousness which reads back through the shock of place and time for omens of capacity, for thresholds of capacity that were latent, unrealised, within the clash of cultures and movements of peoples into the South Americas and the West Indies.<sup>24</sup>

In Harris' view, there is no prospect of moving beyond stases of protest and self-pity except through a creative philosophy born of immersion in elements of myth that have been long ignored. In the work of García Márquez, too, it is transcendent mythical vision which points the way to psychic integration. As I have observed, both writers believe that novelistic form must contain this 'inner time' as well as history and I would like now to look at the mythical systems which have helped shape this fusion of realities into the artistic form we know as magical realism.



NOTES

Chapter 1) REALITY I: HISTORY

(a) History and Modern Political Reality

1. Eduardo Galeano: Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent [originally published as Las venas abiertas de América Latina Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno 1971] trans. Cedric Belfrage (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980 [1973]), p.308.
2. *ibid.* p.302.
3. Miguel Angel Asturias: El Papa Verde (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1954), pp.111-112.
4. John Dos Passos: The 42nd Parallel (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930), p.252.
5. Galeano's summary, pp.116-118.
6. Open Veins, p.61.
7. Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchú, ed. Elizabeth Burgos-Debray (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1983), pp.279-280.

(b) Literary Response - Literature of Commitment

8. They Shoot Writers. Don't They?, ed. George Theiner (London: Faber and Faber, 1984).
9. Mario Vargas Llosa: 'The Writer in Latin America' in They Shoot Writers. Don't They? pp.161-171 (p.162).
10. See eg. 'Office Bugs' (1928) in Mayakovsky Vol.1: Selected Verse, trans. Dorian Rottenberg (Moscow: Raduga, 1985), p.215.
11. 'The Workers and Peasants Don't Understand You' (1928) in Mayakovsky Vol.3: Plays, Articles, Essays (Moscow: Raduga, 1987), pp.214-219.
12. Quoted by C.V. James in Soviet Socialist Realism (London: Macmillan, 1973), p.40.
13. Mayakovsky: 'Home!' (1925), in Mayakovsky Vol.1: Selected Verse, p.166.
14. See 'Mayakovsky and His Poetry' introduction to Mayakovsky, trans. and ed. Herbert Marshall, (Durham: Dobson, 1965), pp.17-53, (pp.38-43).
15. Ironically, after his death Mayakovsky was canonised by Stalin with the famous declaration "Mayakovsky was and is the greatest poet of our Socialist epoch," though the publication of his work was still in censored form. See Marshall: Mayakovsky, p.40.

16. Soviet Socialist Realism, p.13.
17. Lunacharsky: On Literature and Art (Moscow: Progress Publications, 1965), p.21.
18. Quoted in Soviet Socialist Realism, p.13.
19. *ibid.* p.13.
20. Milan Kundera: Life is Elsewhere [written 1969, first published in France, 1973] trans. Peter Kussi (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p.116.
21. Soviet Socialist Realism, p.13.
22. Life is Elsewhere, p.148.
23. *ibid.* p.169.
24. Salman Rushdie: 'Casualties of Censorship' in They Shoot Writers, Don't They?, pp.84-87, (p.87).
25. Cited in Soviet Socialist Realism, p.101.
26. Quoted in They Shoot Writers, Don't They?, p.136.
27. Alejo Carpentier: El siglo de las luces (Barcelona: Seix Barral 1983 [1962]), p.114.
28. Isabel Allende: La casa de los espíritus (Barcelona: Plaza y Janes, 1982), p.272.
29. This is not to suggest that writers were not also, as in the Soviet Union, accused of counter-revolutionary tendencies in their work. The Padilla case of 1971, for instance, was a watershed in the relationship between writers and the Revolution - either as the emergence of latent Stalinism, or as proof of the bourgeois intellectual betraying his duty to stand by a revolution under siege. The nature of these debates, however, did not focus on the question of *form* which is the issue here. My interest here is in the developing attitude of literary theorists and intellectuals and their flexibility compared with counterparts in the Soviet Union. This is not to suggest that an ideological hardline did not exist, nor that intellectuals in Cuba were not censored by it.
30. Judith A. Weiss: Casa de las Américas: An Intellectual Review in the Cuban Revolution (Chapel Hill: Estudios de Hispanófila, 1977).
31. *ibid.* p.78.
32. *ibid.* p.80.
33. *ibid.* p.120.
34. Although Mayakovsky's suicide is linked with the advent of Stalinism, the history of the reception and status of his work compared to that of Neruda, reflects the contrasting role of the artist in the Soviet Union and Latin America.

35. Part of an interview published in Nicaragua Today. Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, (Spring, 1988), p.11.

36. Sergio Ramírez in Risking a Somersault in the Air: Conversations with Nicaraguan Writers by Margaret Randall (San Francisco: Solidarity Publications, 1984), pp.21-40 (p.39).

37. Rosario Murillo: 'Confesión' in En las espléndidas ciudades (Managua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, 1985), p.43.

n.b. The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua was always a revolution under threat, first by a U.S. imposed trade embargo and U.S. backed Contra guerillas and now by Chamorro's UNO government. Despite this pressure, and although many of the gains of the Revolution in employment, health and education, have deteriorated under UNO's control, the cultural revolution remains intact.

38. Sergio Ramírez: 'Cultura de masas y creación individual' in Balcones y Volcanes (Managua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, 1985), pp.176-188, (p.178).

39. Sergio Ramírez in Risking a Somersault, p.40.

40. Tomás Borge in Risking a Somersault, pp.205-215 (p.214).

41. Miguel Angel Asturias: El Señor Presidente (Madrid and Buenos Aires: Alianza Losada, 1986 [1946]), p.10.

42. Nicolás Guillén: ¡Patria o Muerte! The Great Zoo and other Poems ed. and trans. Robert Márquez (Havana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1975), p.162.

43. *ibid.* p.166.

44. Quoted by Roberto Díaz Castillo: 'La Cultura Popular como base de la Cultura Revolucionaria' in Nicaragua, no.9 (April, 1983), 109-116, (p.114).

45. Soviet Socialist Realism, preface, p.ix.

46. García Márquez: El olor de la guayaba, pp.81-82.

47. *ibid.* p.82.

48. Gabriel García Márquez: La mala hora (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1985 [1962]), p.51.

49. Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú, pp.8-9.

50. Milan Kundera: 'Comedy is Everywhere' in They Shoot Writers. Don't They?, pp.150-156, (p.155).

51. Gabriel García Márquez: El otoño del patriarca (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1984 [1975]), p.61.

52. Stephen Minta: Gabriel García Márquez. Writer of Colombia (London: Cape, 1987), p.97.

53. Gerald Martin: 'Yo el Supremo: The Dictator and his Script' in Contemporary Latin American Fiction, ed. Salvador Bacarisse (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1980), pp.73-87, (p.79).

54. Salman Rushdie: '*Midnight's Children and Shame*' lecture/interview at the University of Aarhus on 7 October, 1983 published in Kunapipi, 7, no.1 (1985), pp.1-19 (pp.15-16).
55. Chinua Achebe: 'The Novelist as Teacher' in Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays 1965-1987 (Oxford: Heinemann, 1988), pp.27-31, (p.30).
56. Achebe: 'Colonialist Criticism' in Hopes and Impediments, pp.46-61, (p.52).
57. Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike, essays published throughout the 1970s, first published in complete form: Toward the Decolonization of African Literature (Washington: Howard University Press, 1983).
58. Wole Soyinka: 'Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Tradition' in Transition (Accra), no.48 (1975), 38-44.
59. Interview with Patricia Murray, 28th Jan. 1993.
60. In Explorations, p.28.
61. 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' (Georgetown: National History and Arts Council, Ministry of Information and Culture, 1970), pp.5-32, (p.29).
62. A figure like Donne in Palace of the Peacock, for instance, is never static. He is, on the one hand, the purveyor of oppressive domination, and on the other, its victim. Out of this dialectic emerge the possibilities for his renewal and change.
63. 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' in Explorations, p.28.
64. Aubrey Williams: 'The Predicament of the Artist in the Caribbean,' a talk given at the first CAM Conference in September 1967 at the University of Kent, collected in Guyana Dreaming: The Art of Aubrey Williams, ed. Anne Walmsley (Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1990), pp.15-20, (p.15).
65. Gabriel García Márquez: 'La arrasadora utopía de la vida,' speech given in Stockholm on receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature, 8 December, 1982, collected in Nicaragua, no.9 (April, 1983), pp.76-80, (p.78).
- (c) Discovery and Conquest
66. See eg. Eduardo Galeano: Memoria del fuego 1: Los nacimientos (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1985 [1982]), p.206.
67. Quoted in Fernando Horcasitas: The Aztecs Then and Now (Mexico City: Minutiae Mexicana, 1979), p.82.
68. See T.Todorov: The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other, trans. Richard Howard (San Francisco: Harper Torchbooks, 1984).
69. Quoted in George Pendle: A History of Latin America (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p.35.

70. Gabriel García Márquez: El olor de la guayaba: conversaciones con Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza (Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera, 1982), p.74.
71. Cristóbal Colón: 'Diario del Primer Viaje' (1492) in Textos y documentos completos, edición de Consuelo Varela (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1982), pp.15-138, (p.51).
72. *ibid.* p.58.
73. Cristóbal Colón: 'Relación del Tercer Viaje' (1498) in Textos y documentos completos, pp.202-242, (pp.215-216).
74. Cristóbal Colón: 'Relación del Cuarto Viaje' (1503) in Textos y documentos completos, pp.316-330, (p.324).
75. Hernán Cortés: 'Carta Segunda' (1520) in Cartas de relación de la conquista de México (Madrid: Colección Austral, 1982), pp.33-111, (p.45).
76. *ibid.* p.68.
77. *ibid.* p.71.
78. Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España, edición de Miguel León-Portilla, 2 vols. (Madrid: Historia 16, 1984), I, pp.310-311.
79. Hernán Cortés: 'Carta Quinta' (1526) in Cartas de Relación de la Conquista de Mexico, pp.229-300, (p.247).
80. Díaz, I, p.152.
81. *ibid.* p.238.
82. *ibid.* pp.320-321.
83. *ibid.* Capitulo XXXVII: 'Cómo doña Marina era cacica e hija de grandes señores, y señora de pueblos y vasallos, y de la manera que fue traída a Tabasco' pp.158-159.
84. Juan de Cárdenas: Problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988), p.37.
85. *ibid.* p.97.
86. *ibid.* p.223.
87. *ibid.* p.275.
- (d) Limitations of Realism
88. Wilson Harris: Tradition the Writer and Society (London: New Beacon Books, 1967), p.29.
89. Aubrey Williams: 'The Predicament of the Artist in the Caribbean' in Guyana Dreaming, p.19.

90. Wilson Harris: 'A Talk on the Subjective Imagination' in Explorations, pp.57-67, (p.58).
91. Wilson Harris: Tradition the Writer and Society, p.64.
92. García Márquez' words quoted by Harris in 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' (Georgetown, 1970), pp.24-25.
93. Wilson Harris: The Womb of Space: The Cross-cultural Imagination (London: Greenwood Press, 1983), p.55.
94. Wilson Harris: 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' (Georgetown, 1970), p.21.

Chapter 2) REALITY II: MYTH

(a) 'Flower and Song' of Amerindia

The first European debates on the subject of native Americans - whether they were human or not, for example, - thought of the 'Indians' as a single race. Their newness on the historical stage of the Old World outweighed the many regional and other differences between them. For among the 45 or so million people living in the continent in AD 1492, great differences, and enmities, certainly existed. The life-style of the metropolitan Aztecs or Incas had little in common with the habits of fishermen around the Great Lakes, or down in Tierra del Fuego. And the tightly knit confederacies of the Iroquois and Cherokee in the Appalachians hardly resembled the loosely organized and very widespread language family of the Guarani and Tupi in Brazil and Paraguay. Nevertheless, many of these ancient American civilizations were themselves related, often by earlier and obscure levels of conquest, or through religious and commercial links. More importantly, the work of anthropologists, such as that of Lévi-Strauss, has revealed the larger coherence of an overlapping consciousness in the unbroken chain of mythic thought from South to North America.<sup>2</sup>

Myth, as experienced by archaic societies, constitutes the history of the acts of the supernaturals. This history is considered to be absolutely true (because it is concerned with realities) and sacred (because it is the work of the supernaturals). Myth is always related to a "creation." It tells how something came into existence, or how a pattern of behaviour, an institution, a

manner of working were established, and this is why myths constitute the paradigms for all significant human acts. By knowing the myth one knows the "origin" of things and hence can control and manipulate them at will. This is not an external, abstract knowledge, but a knowledge that one "experiences" ritually, either by ceremonially recounting the myth or by performing the ritual for which it is the justification. The important thing is that in one way or another one "lives" the myth, in the sense that one is seized by the sacred, exalting power of the events recollected or re-enacted.

The most important creation myth is that of the formation of the universe and the birth of man. Unlike Western cosmologies, Amerindian cultures do not perceive the contemporary world as existing somehow detached from the remote and scarcely imaginable 'beginning of time,' but as one of a series of creations, whose beginnings and endings are the matter of prime concern. The details of what these 'world ages' were like and how they ended vary or are incomplete in this or that part of the continent; but we may detect a common sequence of events. The Quechua, the Maya, the Toltecs and the peoples of the Southwest had in common a cosmogony of four world ages, the present being the most recent (and sometimes separated off as a fifth). About the first two ages there is striking agreement, down to points of detail. They ended respectively in a flood and in prolonged solar eclipse, both catastrophes being directly or indirectly the result of malfunction in the sky or upper regions. The two (or three) subsequent ages are theatres for struggles between forces more terrestrial in nature. For example, the 'hail of fire' in which the third age ends often emerges from a volcano into which a god has transformed himself. These struggles also prepare the way for contemporary man.



Considering this conception of the birth of man, it is not surprising that Amerindian cultures see reality as constantly in flux, believing that things disintegrate, dissolve, change and pass away. Some concur with the Hegelian belief that each form, each individual manifestation, bears the germ of its own dissolution. This realisation need not be pessimistic or nihilistic for the only tragic thing would be if one mistook this flux, this passing show, for the ultimate reality. Aztec philosophy was centred around these preoccupations: "Do things and men have a real truth or foundation, or are they merely dreamlike, as those things which come into one's semiconscious mind at the moment of awakening? Is it possible to speak the truth on earth?"<sup>3</sup> Failing to find exact answers to these questions they concluded that "it is not here" where the truth is to be found, but beyond the tangible and visible, in the Omeyocan or Place of Duality, where the essence of Divinity could be found. Man could "babble the truth" occasionally through poetic inspiration, through the "flower and song" that came from there and permitted men a glimpse of the universe in moments of intuition.

Such moments of intuition were consciously cultivated through the use of narcotic drugs as gateways to the supernatural, this 'other' dimension which is as real to the Amerindian as that of ordinary, everyday life. In his book The Shaman and the Jaguar: A Study of Narcotic Drugs Among the Indians of Colombia G. Reichel-Dolmatoff explains how this 'otherness' is attained:

To accomplish this change, to see beyond the surface of things through the hills and the waters and the sky - there exist means that can be handled and controlled; there is concentration, abstinence and trance. Or sometimes this 'other' dimension will manifest itself quite suddenly and unexpectedly, allowing a brief and terrifying glimpse of dark powers. But more often the perception of this dimension will be produced quite consciously by chemical means, by powerful drugs under the influence of which the mind will wander into the hidden world of animals and forest spirits, of divine beings and mythical scenes.<sup>4</sup>

A study of the yajé experience, also outlined in this book, reveals how myth and ritual allow these Amerindian communities a route back to the spiritual origin. The effects of yajé (a particular type of narcotic drug) are interpreted as a return to the maternal womb. It is a visit to the place of Creation, the origin of everything that exists, and the viewer thus becomes an eye-witness and a participant in the creation story and the moral concepts it contains.<sup>5</sup> The fetish, the mysterious talisman of Amerindian societies, is similarly an imaginative bridge or gateway through which man, imprisoned in history and time, is able to achieve a rapport with a timeless, original existence. In 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas,' Wilson Harris argues that the small god-images of the Arawaks, called 'zemis,' were icons which signified the inner space or hidden perspectives of the Caribs' totemic world and, as such, represented the collective unconscious of a whole people.<sup>6</sup>

The myth of Quetzalcoatl, which appears in various forms throughout the Americas, embodies all these ideas of division and duality, of transition and decay and ultimate wholeness and fulfilment. He resists summary description because of the variety of roles he plays as a supreme god and because of his association with the earthly ruler of the Toltec capital of Tula. This ruler, dedicated to the cult of Quetzalcoatl, is believed to have ruled over the Toltecs in the second half of the tenth century A.D. From a Toltec ruler he was transformed into a new version of the deity by the Aztecs and other peoples, who combined the two images - man and god. Above all, Quetzalcoatl emerged as the benefactor of mankind, the civilizing god who eschewed human sacrifice and bestowed upon humanity all useful and beautiful arts. All accounts agree on his celestial identity as Venus, the brightest body by far in the sky

after sun and moon, and unique as both the Evening and the Morning star. According to the Nahuatl text Anales de Cuauhtitlan, the earthly Quetzalcoatl is driven from power in Tula by the warlike Tezcatlipoca. Foreseeing his death, Quetzalcoatl burns himself at the place of Incineration and his heart is transformed into the planet Venus:

And it is said that when he burned, his ashes rose up and every kind of precious bird appeared and could be seen rising up to the sky: roseate spoonbill, cotinga, trogon, blue heron, yellow-headed parrot, macaw, white-fronted parrot, and all other precious birds. And after he had become ash the quetzal bird's heart rose up; it could be seen and was known to enter the sky. The old men would say he had become Venus; and it is told that when the star appeared Quetzalcoatl died. From now on he was called the Lord of the Dawn.

Only for four days he did not appear, so it is told, and dwelt in Dead Land. And for another four days he sharpened himself. After eight days the great star appeared called Quetzalcoatl on his ruler's throne.<sup>7</sup>

Venus appears on both the western and the eastern horizons, and disappears while moving from one to the other and back again. According to the Toltec and the Aztec tradition, after entering the sky and then descending in the west, Quetzalcoatl disappears for four plus four days, on his way down to and up from the Dead Land, where he suffers trials and humiliations. After this, he rises in the east, just before sunrise. This capacity to reappear as herald of the sun (which the full moon does not have) distinguished him as a victor over death, with a resilience over time through which catastrophe could be averted.

The resilience of Quetzalcoatl/Venus during his passage through the underworld made him exemplary for the shaman's trance journey, for the numbering and timing of ritual, and for the calendar proper of the Toltec and the Maya. When the Europeans reached America, prior to the Gregorian Reform of 1582, they still had to produce a calendar as satisfactory as those they found there. Calendrical science is in fact inseparable from the major intellectual

achievements of the New World. Historical and astronomical time were systematically correlated there long before they were in the Old World. The calendrical calculations of the Maya sometimes range over thousands of millions of days forwards and backwards in time. Always using the day-unit, the classic Maya synchronized lunar months, solar years, planetary phases, eclipse periods and other phenomena, and correlated them with the events of dynastic and political history. They were the first people in the world to integrate celestial and terrestrial time in a single system and on so comprehensive a scale. Their day calendar, modified by use, endured throughout Maya territory, both in Peten and in the southern highlands. It is the source of specifically Maya concepts of 'rhythm' (between the 'reigns' of the sky and those of the earth) and 'wholeness,' and of hieroglyphic writing itself, through which the 'course of mankind was ciphered clearly.'

This sense of rhythm and wholeness is reflected in the cyclic nature of the Amerindians' calculation of time, as opposed to the linear pattern of our own system. When we say 'Monday, October 7th' we are indicating the day's place within three cycles (week, month, year); but by adding '1991' we submit the cycle to the linear procedure, since the account of the years follows a succession without repetition, from the negative infinity to the positive infinity. Among the Mayas and Aztecs, on the contrary, the cycle prevails over linearity: there is a succession within the month, the year, or the 'cluster' of years; but these latter, rather than being situated in a linear chronology, are repeated exactly from one to the next. There are differences within each sequence, but one sequence is identical with the next, and none is situated in an absolute time. As one inscription in the Chilam Balam says: "Thirteen score years, and then it will always return again."\*

Amerindian cultures developed calendrical records which were accurately scientific on the one hand and deeply enmeshed with ritual on the other. Their intimate connection with daily ritual ensured that they were a lived experience rather than an abstract system of knowledge. As with other aspects of Amerindian life, the central focus is mythical and spiritual but it is one in which highly sophisticated scientific knowledge is also integrated. 'Medicine,' for instance, was a ritual matter where health or 'wholeness' was believed to depend on elements and forces which affected far more than the individual body. In some cases the causes of diseases themselves were believed to have a clear cosmic significance and role - harmful winds, for example, or the moon whose variable waxings and wanings and baleful influence were guarded against in Maya screenfolds and in Inca medical texts. At the same time the healer was a professional who had skills and codes proper to him. He had a specialist knowledge of plants and herbs, of the allo- and homeopathic chemistry of the gall stone, of surgery or 'handwork,' and he knew how to shrink or restore the inner head or soul.<sup>9</sup> Pachacutti's Inca laws punished faulty medical knowledge, and the Aztecs assessed the performance of individual healers, appreciating the 'good physician and diagnostician' as one who had 'examinations, experience and prudence.'

Science and ritual were vividly combined in the healer's role as shaman bearer of the soul where the healer acted as the guide of his patient's soul, counteracting soul-loss and retrieving errant souls. With hypnotic rhetoric he recounted entire life journeys, like that of Quetzalcoatl, whose therapy consisted in activating the confidence to survive the tests along the spiritual path. The shaman reserved his strongest medicine for the most hazardous path of all, that through death, which he would have travelled himself at

least once. The migration of the soul through the underworld past the eastern horizon to the 'heart of the sky' was one of the constants on his cosmic medicine.

Shamanistic chants and narratives composed to heal the soul in sickness and in death also form an important element of the continent's written literature. At the same time as most Amerindian written texts had some demonstrable function, ritual or social, the singers and scribes who composed them were aware of their own skill as professionals, of using specific conventions, styles and modes, and of having what in some cases amounted to theories of creativity.

At the most fundamental level it was through the faculty of speech that the artist imitated the creative power of the gods. Wholly dependent on memory, he composed chants and narratives which mimicked and recorded the divine utterance through which the world was created in oral cosmogony. In so far as this verbal discourse was modified by or relied on visual symbols and signs, these were recognized as a means of creative expression analogous to speech. In recounting the origins of this artistic ritual, the Mide shamans, the sandpainters of the Southwest and the Toltecs alike refer to 'culture-bringers' whose identities are similar and who are distinguished by having provided song and writing as reciprocal arts. In the Toltec tradition it is Quetzalcoatl who has this role, the singing master and the teacher of the screenfold scribe. In the Nahua language 'to utter a flower' and 'to paint a song' are phrases which well illustrate the degree to which this reciprocity was felt between the two media. Sustained comparison between them led further to the idea of craftsmanship for its own sake. The Nahua word for artistry in this sense was *toltecayotl*, 'Toltec-ness,' in honour of Quetzalcoatl of Tula whose brush-pen was the foil for Tezcatlipoca's spear.

The Maya created an image of their own tradition in an incised bone from Tikal, which shows a hand holding a brush-pen emerging from a mouth like a tongue. Here, the voice and the graphic image are not just reciprocal media: the tongue finds direct expression in the pen, as it did in hieroglyphic writing. In the calendar of their Classic Era, the Maya combined the rich iconography of north America with arithmetical principles of place-value used by their predecessors and, to the south, by the Chibcha and the Inca, with their *quipus*.<sup>10</sup> The result of this combination, Maya hieroglyphic writing, is unique in the New World; and in reflecting upon their literature Mayan authors pointed to its origins in their calendar and arithmetic. They wrote songs which contrived to recount the beginning of time, and narratives which end but do not end.

From an original social function, then, certain types of composition developed into genres and modes cultivated for their own sake. In the complex societies of Mexico and Peru urban poets developed their art in modes derived from the tasks of the countryside and from the ritual occasions of public life. Such poets formed a 'Brotherhood' at the Aztec imperial court and were known as *haravek* in Peru. Songs were designated for a wide range of tasks and out of those originating in planting emerged the creative aesthetic of the poets. Planting itself implies creativity, a germination and flowering, and like the plant growing from its seed, the poem was perceived as growing organically and unfolding. The poets of the Aztec Brotherhood referred to their works as perfect plants while the very word for poetry, *xochicuicatl* or flower-song, stems from the same idea. The element 'xo-', to grow or flourish, is also found in the Nahua mode in which this idea is most highly developed: the *xopan-cuicatl* or burgeon song. In the 'burgeon' mode of Nahua poetry there is far less emphasis on inspiration, on the

breath from outside filling the poet like an empty vessel, than on growth from within. It is this aesthetic which fascinated the Surrealists, notably Antonin Artaud, in their dealings with Mexico when searching for alternatives to Western norms. As we shall see in later chapters, it is also this emphasis which recurs in the attempts of modern writers to reintegrate the fractured American psyche.

The silencing and the obliteration of the native Amerindians have been predicted as inevitable and imminent ever since Columbus. The Conquistadores attempted to literally burn the Amerindian cultures into extinction. In Los Nacimientos, an evocative recreation of Amerindian life and confrontation with Europe, Eduardo Galeano relates an incident which took place at Maní in 1562:

Esta noche se convierten en cenizas ocho siglos de literatura maya. En estos largos pliegos de papel de corteza, hablaban los signos y las imágenes: contaban los trabajos y los días, los sueños y las guerras de un pueblo nacido antes que Cristo. Con pinceles de cerdas de jabalí, los sabedores de cosas habían pintado estos libros alumbrados, alumbradores, para que los nietos de los nietos no fueran ciegos y supieran verse y ver la historia de los suyos, para que conocieran el movimiento de las estrellas, la frecuencia de los eclipses y las profecías de los dioses, y para que pudieran llamar a las lluvias y a las buenas cosechas de maíz.''

Yet despite many savage attacks, half a millennium later Amerindian traditions still persist. As Galeano goes on to say:

Cuando le queman sus casitas de papel, la memoria encuentra refugio en las bocas que cantan las glorias de los hombres y los dioses, *cantares que de gente en gente quedan*, y en los cuerpos que danzan al son de los troncos huecos, los caparazones de tortuga y las flautas de caña.

In more than one part of the continent Amerindian speech and signs persist, and their coherence. Aspects of the ancient religions also survive. The Catholic religion assimilated a few magical and totemic features of the Amerindian religions in a vain attempt to submit their faith to the Conquistadores' ideology. But the crushing of the original culture opened the way for syncretism, so



that native myths and rituals now also live on under the guise of Catholicism.<sup>12</sup> In literature, writers like Asturias in Hombres de Maíz and Galeano in Los Nacimientos consciously recreate the identity and mythical vision of the Amerindian peoples, and it is this identity and vision which, as later chapters will reveal, have been the inspiration for many of the themes and stylistic innovations of magical realist writing.

(b) The Logic of Wings: Afro-American Realities

Contrary to the image of a dark, unexplored continent that so often appears in school history books, a variety of cultures and societies thrived in Africa before the arrival of the Europeans. Living as nomads, as hunters and gatherers, as members of settled farming communities and as residents of flourishing trading towns and cities, African societies in the fifteenth century matched, and in some cases excelled, those in Europe. There were the powerful Amharic dynasties of Ethiopia, the wealthy empires of Benin, Congo, Mali, Ghana, and Songhai, with their highly developed mining, military and trading skills, and the thriving seaports along the East African coastline, where Arab, Indian and Chinese merchants mingled and intermarried with the local populations. To cities such as Kilwa and Quelimane, goods ranging from cloths and spices to jewels and works of art were brought by caravan, crossing the continent regularly from west to east. They carried religious, cultural and scientific ideas with them, giving rise to a dynamic exchange of ideas and the rapid spread of Islam.

When Europeans first began their voyages of exploration five hundred years ago, they already knew the reputation of the continents they sought. Capitalism in Europe was in its infancy, and there was a growing need for raw materials and new trading routes and markets. This need to satisfy a newly-developing money economy was the purpose behind the voyages which heralded the 'discoveries' of both America and Africa in the fifteenth century, and while Columbus searched on the one coast, Africa was plundered

of its most prized resources - gold, for much needed coinage, minerals such as iron, and precious substances like ivory. But this exploitative relationship was only the beginning. Once the European nations had finally carved up the Caribbean, the native population having been depleted by massacres, imported diseases and enslavement, it became clear that its potential could never be fully realised without an adequate alternative supply of labour. Poor whites, mainly convicts and indentured servants brought from Europe, proved unsatisfactory, in terms of both expense and efficiency. The early colonists were left with fertile lands, the possibility of great and lasting profits, but no workers. And so the trade in African lives began.

Transported in shackles and packed into a space no greater than six by sixteen feet, only one in seven Africans survived the filth, the disease, the malnutrition and the unfeeling brutality of the Middle Passage. Many defiant and desperate men and women jumped overboard and drowned rather than accept the indignity of this dehumanising experience. With as many as twenty slaves chained together, this meant mass suicide, the horrors of which only provided further racist justifications for the traders' exchange in human flesh. George Lamming vividly recreates this perspective in his novel Natives of My Person:

Forgetting all encumbrance, they did make a leap overboard in the night, which was an act no less than suicide; for it was impossible to swim with such an encumbrance of chains and their imprisonment one to the next. It was a spectacle to arouse our pity, seeing their remains, which were torn up and eaten to fragments by the crocodiles that prowl here waiting to feed from the ship. For a mile or more around the river we saw such a spectacle of blood, with limbs floating everywhere like logs, and the red fragments of skullbone and ribs we could scarcely recognize . . . This decision to leap was beyond our reason, so that we did surmise - and ancient wisdom also confirms - how this blackness of hide which resembles skin must be nature's way of warning against the absence of any soul within, which is the clear cause of their ignorance, just as a true Christian countenance resembles the colour of the sun, thereby giving a power and beauty of light which adorns the skin and supporteth

all pious reason; being yet further proof that there be nothing that appears by accident or indolent chance in the purpose and harmony of our Lord's creation.<sup>13</sup>

According to Christian logic and reason Africans, like Amerindians, were hardly human. For this reason they could be weighed and sold like animals in the marketplace, forcibly torn from family and kinsmen and scattered indiscriminately throughout the Americas. But despite these circumstances the common assumption that, in the words of a well-known critic, the Caribbean people "for several centuries . . . lived destitute and inarticulate in a political, social and cultural void"<sup>14</sup> is quite wrong. Despite the experience of slavery, African cultural values and traditions were preserved and perpetuated, often reconstituted out of the fragments of differing tribal heritages to create a newly invigorated Afro-american identity which continues to resist and to question the logic and reason that attempted to annihilate it.

Equiano's Travels is an important text in establishing the African's response to the Americas and in reversing many of the accumulated myths used by apologists for slavery.<sup>15</sup> Seized and thrown aboard a slave-ship when still a child, Olaudah Equiano is amazed at the savage way in which the whites looked and acted, and is shocked by their cruelty. He believes them to be savages and thinks that he is about to be eaten by these ugly, hideous creatures.<sup>16</sup> He responds to his new surroundings with a sense of wonder reminiscent of Columbus in his first Chronicles:

The clouds appeared to me to be land, which disappeared as they passed along. This heightened my wonder, and I was now more persuaded than ever that I was in another world and that everything about me was magic.<sup>17</sup>

At other times everyday European realities disturb him in the same way they did the Amerindians:

The first object that engaged my attention was a watch which hung on the chimney and was going. I was quite surprised at the noise it made and was afraid it would tell the gentleman

anything I might do amiss: and when I immediately after observed a picture hanging in the room which appeared constantly to look at me, I was still more affrighted, having never seen such things as these before. At one time I thought it was something relative to magic, and not seeing it move I thought it might be some way the whites had to keep their great men when they died and offer them libation as we used to do our friendly spirits.<sup>18</sup>

Though only a child at the time, he remembers vividly the rich oral culture of his early life in Eboe, a society intimately connected through daily myth and ritual, where there was little distinction between the spiritual and physical worlds. The spirits of ancestors, for instance, were believed to continually guard the living, giving them strength and direction. For this reason libation - a small offering of food and water - was always made to these spirits before eating.<sup>19</sup> Years later, Equiano expresses surprise on seeing large numbers of Africans in Kingston gathering to perform these same native customs.<sup>20</sup> In fact many African traditions were retained intact, such as celebrations of birth and death, naming ceremonies, burying the navel string of a new-born child to safeguard its spirit and the nine nights' wake for the dead. Women particularly continued to practice herbal medicine and many of the herbs and barks such as pimpe, mapimpe, and pem-pem have retained their Ashanti names to this day.

Throughout the Americas runaway slaves formed communities that reconstructed African life, growing their food, worshipping their gods, practicing their ancient customs. In Esmeraldas in Ecuador, in the mountains of Haiti, known as Maroons in Jamaica and Djukas in Surinam, descendants of these slaves even today look upon the rainbow as the road back to Guinea - in a ship with a white sail. But outside of such runaway communities African customs could not openly flourish. Cultural assumptions not only draw the line which decides where reality ends and fantasy and magic begin, but also produce fear in the face of another's 'magic.' In the same way that

Equiano was afraid of the Europeans' paintings and watches, so were Europeans afraid of the powers of African voodoo and sorcery. Unlike Equiano, however, most had no desire to learn or understand the skills of another culture. They masked their fear by disbelief and brutal repression, unable to accept the existence of a power that questioned their own rational assumptions or that threatened their authority in the Americas. In Los nacimientos Galeano recreates the execution of a black sorcerer on St. Thomas Island in 1700:

Vanbel, el mandamás, lo ha condenado porque este negro desata la lluvia cuando se le ocurre, hincándose ante tres naranjas, y porque tiene un ídolo de barro que le contesta todas las preguntas y lo salva de todas las dudas.<sup>21</sup>

As the story develops the stark contrast between the negro's calm display of his power and the plantation owner's desperate denial of those powers intensifies. Through this tension the extract suggests that the European may burn the negro, but he will never burn the spirits which empower the African.

This scene evokes a famous historical incident which occurred in Santo Domingo in 1758: the burning of the influential slave rebel, Mackandal, which is one of the key events in Carpentier's El reino de este mundo. In Carpentier's description Mackandal's execution is subtly undercut by the possibility of flight:

El fuego comenzó a subir hacia el manco, sollamándole las piernas. En ese momento, Mackandal agitó su muñón que no habían podido atar, en un gesto conminatorio que no por menguado era menos terrible, aullando conjuros desconocidos y echando violentamente el torso hacia adelante. Sus atadoras cayeron, y el cuerpo del negro se espigó en el aire, volando por sobre las cabezas, antes de hundirse en las ondas negras de la masa de esclavos.<sup>22</sup>

Mackandal is a sorcerer who constitutes an undisguised mockery of institutionalised authority and its attempts to impose shackles on something that has no body to bind:

Con alas un día, con agallas al otro, galopando o reptando, se había adueñado del curso de los ríos subterráneos, de las

cavernas de la costa, de las copas de los árboles, y reinaba ya sobre la isla entera. Ahora sus poderes eran ilimitados.<sup>23</sup>

The link between flying and sorcery is of vital importance to Afro-american myth. There are numerous tales about and allusions to flight in Afro-american folklore, all of which are, in one way or another, versions of what is commonly known as the myth of the flying Africans:

Once all Africans could fly like birds; but owing to their many transgressions, their wings were taken away. There remained, here and there, in the sea-lands and out-of-the-way places in the low country, some who had been overlooked, and had retained the power of flight, though they looked like other men.<sup>24</sup>

In this sense, as Vera Kutzinski notes, those who have retained the gift of flight are the guardians of Afro-america's cultural tradition, a tradition which contains its own logic, though it may question the logic of those systems which attempt to appropriate it.<sup>25</sup>

This is the central metaphor in García Márquez' 'Un Señor muy viejo con unas alas enormes.' In this story the protagonist of the title appears suddenly after a storm and the "inconvenience" of his wings gives rise to much speculation concerning his identity. Wanting to appropriate him into a Christian framework, many believe him to be an angel. As his strange dialect is not that of Latin, however, Father Gonzaga must assume that he is one of the devil's carnival tricks. Only the doctor, who cannot resist examining him, is struck by "la lógica de sus alas":

Resultaban tan naturales en aquel organismo completamente humano, que no podía entender por qué no las tenían también los otros hombres.<sup>26</sup>

Although clearly located on the Caribbean coast, it is significant that the protagonist of García Márquez' story is not black, for the African presence in the Americas does not manifest itself in skin colour alone. In her introduction to El monte<sup>27</sup> Lydia Cabrera notes that the practices and rites of the black sorcerers are directed

towards the well-being of their community, and that this community also includes a large number of white members, who are not necessarily converts to santería, voodoo, or any of the other Afro-american religions in that region, but nonetheless avail themselves of the special knowledge and services of the 'brujos' or 'brujas.'

This is true of the bahia community celebrated by Jorge Amado in his novel Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands where the Afro-american myths and rites serve as a cohesive structure around the spiritual life of Brazil. Although the Catholic religion officially embraces 94 percent of the population of Brazil, African traditions are maintained, often camouflaged behind Christian saints, and cults of African origin are widely practiced by the oppressed, whatever their skin colour. In Bahia especially, ceremonial chants are intoned in Nagô, Yoruba, Congo and other African languages. These Afro-american rites are evident throughout Amado's novel, though Dona Flor does not consider herself a part of them:

It is better not to get mixed up in those mysteries of *macumba* and *candomblé*; the streets are full of spells and conjures, powerful hexes, dangerous witch doctors, sorcery. Let whoever wants to believe, believe; whoever doesn't, doesn't have to. Dona Flor preferred not to investigate.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, Dona Flor's life revolves around the worship of African gods that suffuses Bahia, transfigured though they are by American naturalisation:

She came for the procession in honour of Yemanjá, on the second of February, when the fishing smacks skim the waves, laden with flowers and gifts for Dona Janaina, the mother of the waters, of the storms, of the fish, of life and death of the sea. As offerings, she brought a comb, a bottle of perfume, a cheap ring. Yemanjá lives in Rio Vermelho, her shrine on a point of land stretching into the ocean.<sup>29</sup>

In Bahia, as in Africa, there is little distinction between the physical and spiritual worlds and the spirits of the dead are intimately entwined with the experiences of the living. Amado treats this theme humorously in his novel as the dead Vadinho



answers the call of his now remarried wife, Flor. Both characters' strength of feeling, however, becomes associated with their patron African deities and their battle to stay together becomes a cosmic battle of the gods:

The city rose up in the air, and the clocks marked midnight and noon at the same time in the war of the gods. All the *orixás* had assembled to bury Vadinho, that rebellious spirit of the dead and his burden of love, with Exu alone defending him. Lightning and thunder, whirlwind, steel against steel, and black blood. The encounter took place at the crossroads of the final pathway, on the boundaries of nonbeing.<sup>30</sup>

Despite her initial fear of Afro-american religions, Dona Flor enlists all of their special powers and is herself finally able to intervene in the battle of love over death:

It was at that moment that a figure traversed the air, and bursting through the most tightly sealed paths, overcame distance and hypocrisy - a thought free of all shackles. It was Dona Flor, completely naked. Her cry of love outdid Yansa's cry of death. At the last moment when Exu was rolling down the hillside and a poet was composing Vadinho's epitaph.<sup>31</sup>

Amado presents a world of possibilities, of strength and energy, derived from the lived experience of spiritual and cultural traditions. Where there is a loss of such ritual and energy there is a consequent paralysis and emptiness. In The Dragon Can't Dance Earl Lovelace locates the Trinidadian's incapacity for change and revolution in that disassociation between a people and their traditions and through his central metaphor he attempts to re-establish the presence and potency of the rituals of carnival. Through his carnival role, the central character, Aldrick, must learn to forge a connection with his African past which is vital but which also demands an individual identity. He must learn to be "both dragon and man."<sup>32</sup> This double emphasis, on the *present* as well as the *past*, on the *individual* as well as the *collective*, is present in each of the texts already discussed and reminds us that African myths and traditions are not only preserved, but also transposed and subverted to create a specifically New World reality.

The myth of flying, for instance, may suggest notions of escape, of a return to Africa, but in fact it is the importance of *this* world which is emphasized. In El reino de este mundo Ti Noël inherits Mackandal's powers of metamorphosis and uses them to flee "ese inacabable retoñar de cadenas, ese renacer de grillos, esa proliferación de miserias."<sup>33</sup> The final and most powerful moment of the novel, however, is Ti Noël's realisation of his own cowardice. Mackandal had disguised himself as an animal for years to serve men, not to abjure the world of men, and in resuming his human form Ti Noël embraces the fact that:

. . . agobiado de penas y de Tareas, hermoso dentro de su miseria, capaz de amar en medio de las plagas, el hombre sólo puede hallar su grandeza, su máxima medida en el Reino de este Mundo<sup>34</sup>

Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon is a more recent Afro-american novel that makes this point very strongly. Although Solomon's actual flight back to Africa is a seductive event which inspires his descendants, Milkman learns through Pilate that there is more than one way to fly and that the gift of flight, in all its spiritual ramifications, must be harnessed to the here and now. "You just can't fly on off and leave a body"<sup>35</sup> Jake reminds his descendants. The knowledge of ancestors is crucial, but so is an identification with the present and the responsibilities of the present.

The ancestry that Milkman must recover is African, through his grandfather Jake to the mythical Solomon, but also Amerindian, through his grandmother Singing Bird. In taking account of both, his identity necessarily transposes both and it is in just such transpositions that Wilson Harris locates the liberating quality of Afro-american religions:

African *vodun* is a school of ancestors: it is very conservative. Something of this conservative focus remains very strongly in Haitian *vodun* but there is an absorption of new elements which breaks the tribal monolith of the past and re-assembles an intertribal or cross-cultural community of families.<sup>36</sup>

In an article entitled 'The Black Novel in Latin America Today'<sup>37</sup> Richard L. Jackson explores this creative syncretism as it emerges in the Afro-hispanic novels of Nelson Estupifán Bass (Ecuador), Quince Duncan (Costa Rica), Carlos Guillermo Wilson (Panama), and Manuel Zapata Olivella (Colombia). Although in each there is an emphasis on the need to preserve African traditions, in a variety of complex and experimental ways these traditions are re-interpreted from a New world perspective in order to confront myths of oppression. Zapata Olivella's Changó, el gran putas is the most ambitious in its use of Shango, the hero-god of the Yoruba, to re-appropriate myths of slavery. The strength, arrogance and ability of the most popular and colourful of the orishas is translated in the New World into the language of survival. In mythological terms, Africans were banished for their sins against Shango, but after having served their penance (slavery) are infused with his fighting spirit until they become, like him, strong and powerful warriors dedicating their lives to their own liberation. Again, although this novel has its roots in African "soul-force" - the power of the spirits of ancestors to give strength and direction to the living - the emphasis is on the "nuevo Munto Americano" ("the new American man") who becomes a voice of hope for the wider cross-cultural community.

Despite the experience of slavery and the opposition of rational systems of thought, African myths and traditions have not only endured their transplantation but have responded anew to the challenge of a cross-cultural identity. The African influence extends far beyond the Caribbean islands and coastal regions traditionally settled by descendants of slaves and we cannot penetrate the reality of the Americas without considering that African presence. Harris and García Márquez are part of a long

tradition of writers who continue to draw inspiration from an African ancestry in affirming their own Afro-american identity.

(c) The Unconscious and Mythical Archetypes

By the turn of the twentieth century, investigations within fields as diverse as Physics, Psychology and Anthropology began to question the very basis of rationalism and to make profound connections with the philosophies of primitive cultures. The processes of psychology and psychoanalysis, and the work of Jung in particular, increasingly drew inspiration from ancient mythological structures in their investigations into the human psyche. These investigations have, in turn, helped writers like Harris and García Márquez to bridge the gap between inherited native and European discourses.

Jung, however, is a problematic source for the late twentieth century critic. In contrast to the positive influence of Freud for the development of feminist theory, the androcentric biases of archetypal psychology have produced readings of gender that are static rather than dynamic.<sup>38</sup> Bearing Achebe's words in mind, the post-colonial critic must also approach Jung's notion of the 'universal' archetype with caution. But as Christine Downing points out in her essay 'Jung and Freud'<sup>39</sup> the antithesis that insists on either/or is unhelpful for comparative and interdisciplinary study, as ongoing revisionings reveal both perspectives to be more dialectical and imaginative than either of the movements they spawned. Though with some theoretical reservations about the details of his presentation, Downing focuses the importance of Jung's work as a challenge to the supremacy of the ego and the limits of rationality. With similar reservations, Wilson Harris describes himself as having a "dialogue"<sup>40</sup> with Jung and acknowledges the value of his work in emphasizing the transformative

capacity of imagination. It is in this context that Jung's ideas about the unconscious and mythical archetypes become relevant to this study, both in helping to focus the individual spiritual journey as it emerges in the work of Harris and García Márquez and in illuminating the structures of narrative through which both writers explore the hybridity of consciousness.

Jung's approach to the structure of the psyche was deliberately cross-cultural and he was critical of what he perceived to be a Eurocentrism in Freud's position:

A general psychological theory that claims to be scientific should not be based on the malformations of the nineteenth century, and a theory of neurosis must also be capable of explaining hysteria among the Maori. As soon as the sexual theory leaves the narrow field of neurotic psychology and branches out into other fields, for instance that of primitive psychology, its one-sidedness and inadequacy leap to the eye. Insights that grew up from the observation of Viennese neuroses between 1890 and 1920 prove themselves poor tools when applied to the problems of totem and taboo, even when the application is made in a very skilful way.<sup>41</sup>

At the same time as his perspective was broader, though, his focus, at a time when there was so much concentration on social development in the West, was on the individual's relations with the different parts of his own psyche. Though aware of the importance of interpersonal relationships, Jung believed that it was only when the individual had come to terms with himself that satisfactory relationships with others could be achieved. As he wrote in

Memories, Dreams, Reflections:

Companionship thrives only when each individual remembers his individuality and does not identify himself with others.<sup>42</sup>

Jung recognised that society exerted powerful attitudes upon the individual which, depending on the degree of the ego's identification with the attitude of the moment, often produced character-splitting.<sup>43</sup> He felt that such a person was not individual but collective, the plaything of circumstance and general expectations. The recovery of individuality, which he termed "the

process of individuation,"<sup>44</sup> became the central concept of Jung's psychology.

In his essay The Undiscovered Self, Jung begins by exposing the West's over-reliance on statistics and its lack of focus on the individual:

The statistical method shows the facts in the light of the ideal average but does not give us a picture of their empirical reality. While reflecting an indisputable aspect of reality, it can falsify the actual truth in a most misleading way. This is particularly true of theories which are based on statistics. The distinctive thing about real facts, however, is their individuality. Not to put too fine a point on it, one could say that the real picture consists of nothing but exceptions to the rule, and that, in consequence, absolute reality has predominantly the character of *irregularity*.<sup>45</sup>

Jung felt that scientific education, based in the main on statistical truths and abstract knowledge, imparted an unrealistic, rational picture of the world, in which the individual, as a merely marginal phenomenon, played no role. The individual, however, is the only *concrete* carrier of reality, as opposed to the unreal ideal or 'normal' man to whom scientific statements refer and because the individual psyche is of enormous ambiguity Jung felt theoretical presuppositions to be inadequate in its investigation:

The shoe that fits one person pinches another; there is no universal recipe for living. Each of us carries his own life-form within him - an irrational form which no other can outbid.<sup>46</sup>

Jung's statements about the individual, and his vision of reality, share parallels with the discoveries of quantum physics and through his collaboration with the physicist Wolfgang Pauli, Jung came to believe that the physicist's investigation of matter and the psychologist's investigation of the depths of the psyche might be different ways of approaching the same underlying reality. At the subatomic level, physicists realized that it was possible to look at one and the same event through two different frames of reference which, though mutually exclusive, were nevertheless complementary.<sup>47</sup>

The Principle of Complementarity, which became a cornerstone of modern physics, was also central to Jung's process of individuation. In direct opposition to the ideals of reason and logic, Jung saw the paradox as one of our most valuable spiritual possessions, and uniformity of meaning as a sign of weakness. Just as the world exists only because opposing forces are held in equilibrium, Jung believed that wholeness or integration of the self consisted in the dialectical union of opposites and that the psyche, individual or collective, became inwardly impoverished when it lost or watered down its paradoxes. Jung believed that the decline in Christian belief, for instance, was related to the fact that the Christ-image, which excludes both evil and the feminine, can no longer symbolize wholeness for modern man.<sup>48</sup> In Western antiquity and especially in Eastern cultures the opposites often remain united in the same figure, though this paradox does not disturb people in the least. The legends about such gods are as full of contradictions as are their moral characters. With the Christian reformation of the Jewish concept of the Deity, however, the morally ambiguous Yahweh became an exclusively good God, while everything evil was united in the devil. This inability to recognise opposites as facets of the same reality Jung related to the loss of intuitive vision in Western systems of thought.<sup>49</sup>

Although Jung was unable to subscribe to the Christian faith in which he had been reared, he continued to believe that individuals could neither be happy nor healthy unless they acknowledged their dependence upon some higher power than that of the ego. The process of individuation was in this sense a spiritual journey in which the individual, having unlocked the personal unconscious to re-integrate the self, became aware of how that self was connected to all other selves in a much larger collective unconscious.<sup>50</sup>



It was Jung's acquaintance with the phenomena associated with schizophrenia which first led him to postulate this "collective" unconscious. As Storr summarizes, he found that delusions and hallucinations, which often seemed to be variations on similar themes, could seldom be entirely explained as products of the patient's personal history. Jung's extensive knowledge of comparative religion and of mythology led him to detect parallels with psychotic material which argued a common source: a myth-producing level of mind which was common to all men and often articulated through dreams.<sup>51</sup>

Jung regarded dreams as communications from the unconscious. Most commonly, they were compensatory to the conscious point of view - expressions of aspects of the individual which were neglected or unrealised, or, like neurotic symptoms, warnings of divergence from the individual's true path. Dreams from the collective level, however, might be visions of vast significance, quite outside the range of conscious contrivance. What the primitive calls a "big dream," its imagery frequently makes use of motifs analogous to or even identical with those of mythology. Jung called these structures *archetypes* and argued that they could be found everywhere and at all times:

They occur in the folklore of primitive races, in Greek, Egyptian, and ancient Mexican myths, as well as in the dreams, visions, and delusions of modern individuals entirely ignorant of all such traditions.<sup>52</sup>

Because these recurrent images could be found in the most diverse minds and in all epochs, Jung believed they could not be mistaken for inherited ideas. Like the Amerindian's and Afro-american's understanding of myth, archetypes serve to connect the individual with the totality of his/her psyche:

. . . they bring into our ephemeral consciousness an unknown psychic life belonging to a remote past. It is the mind of our

unknown ancestors, their way of thinking and feeling, their way of experiencing life and the world, gods and men.<sup>53</sup>

Jung's belief in the ultimate unity of all existence led him to perceive of physical and mental, as well as spatial and temporal, as human categories imposed upon reality which did not accurately reflect it. Archetypes, for instance, existed outside of time and space and could be both physical and/or mental. The principle connecting such "chance" occurrences Jung termed *synchronicity*.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout his life, as Storr explains, Jung had been impressed by clusters of significant events occurring together, and by the fact that these events might be physical as well as mental. The physical death of one individual, for example, might coincide with a disturbing dream referring to that death in the mind of another. Jung felt that such coincidences, which he considered "relatively common," demanded an explanatory principle in addition to causality, and this principle he named synchronicity. According to Jung,<sup>55</sup> Synchronicity was based on a universal order of meaning, complementary to causality. He thought that synchronistic phenomena were connected with archetypes which he referred to as psychoid factors of the collective unconscious, meaning by this that archetypes were neither physical nor mental but partaking of both realms, and able, therefore, to manifest themselves both physically and mentally simultaneously. Jung refers to the case of Swedenborg, who experienced a vision of a fire in Stockholm at the same time as an actual fire was raging. Jung considered that some change in Swedenborg's state of mind gave him temporary access to "absolute knowledge," to an area in which the limits of space and time are transcended.<sup>56</sup>

Many of Jung's investigations into the psyche and into psychic phenomena seemed controversial and contentious because they could not be contained by reason and logic. Jung himself was far from

belittling what he called "the divine gift of reason, man's highest faculty."<sup>57</sup> But he was aware that the rational was always counterbalanced by the irrational and that sometimes the laws of reason needed to be challenged if this balance was to be maintained:

We must remember that the rationalistic attitude of the West is not the only possible one and is not all-embracing, but is in many ways a prejudice and a bias that ought perhaps to be corrected.<sup>58</sup>

In his analysis of synchronicity Jung points out that the primitive as well as the classical and medieval views of nature postulate the existence of some such principle alongside causality. His description of the primitive mind is reminiscent of the stories collected in Galeano's Los nacimientos:

I need hardly point out that for the primitive mind synchronicity is a self-evident fact; consequently at this stage there is no such thing as chance. No accident, no illness, no death is ever fortuitous or attributable to "natural" causes. Everything is somehow due to magical influence. The crocodile that catches a man while he is bathing has been sent by a magician; illness is caused by some spirit or other; the snake that was seen by the grave of somebody's mother is obviously her soul; etc.<sup>59</sup>

Jung goes on to say that on the primitive level synchronicity does not appear as an idea by itself, but as "magical" causality:

This is an early form of our classical idea of causality, while the development of Chinese philosophy produced from the connotation of the magical the "concept" of Tao, of meaningful coincidence, but no causality-based science.<sup>60</sup>

In contrast to the dialectical unity of Tao, and with the rise of the physical sciences in the nineteenth century, the correspondence theory vanished completely in the West, and with it the magical world of earlier ages. For this reason, Jung felt it especially important that man remain conscious of the world of archetypes because in it he is still a part of Nature and not cut off from the primordial images of life. In this sense, archetypes are:

. . . manifestations of the collective unconscious [which] are compensatory to the conscious attitude, so that they have the effect of bringing a one-sided, unadapted, or dangerous state of consciousness back into equilibrium.<sup>61</sup>

In compensating this state of spiritual deficiency the archetype rarely presents an easy solution. In one example,<sup>62</sup> Jung relates the dream of a young theological student experiencing spiritual difficulties in which archetypal black and white magicians confront him with the uncertainty of all moral valuation and the bewildering interplay of good and evil. The problematic nature of "wholeness" is constantly emphasized in Jung's writings so that although he may often sound more idealistic than later psychoanalysts such as Lacan, he is as much aware of "the false coherency of the whole self."<sup>63</sup> For Jung, to be ideal is impossible for idealisms are hollow, and can become oppressive, if their opposite is not openly admitted:

Recognition of the shadow, on the other hand, leads to the modesty we need in order to acknowledge imperfection.<sup>64</sup>

If Jung's analyses sometimes appear confused and contradictory it is because, as Wilson Harris has said, "arts of wholeness are less easily defined than politics of repression and sublimation."<sup>65</sup> In the Americas, where the politics of repression are so clearly defined, Jung has provided a language through which writers like Harris and García Márquez can begin to unravel complex diversities. Drawing on many of the methods and concepts of psychological investigation, the narratives of both writers resemble the "big dreams" of primitive cultures in their activation of archetypal images and in reshaping ancient myths into the language of the present. Joseph Campbell, a more recent Jungian philosopher, has been particularly interested in this process. Referring to the Ganges as the sacred source of the East in his study Transformations of Myth Through Time, Campbell writes:

The Ganges, actually, is a Goddess, Ganga, and this flowing water is the grace that comes to us from the power of the female power. In Joyce's Finnegan's Wake, he uses the same image for the River Liffey, which flows through Dublin, and Dublin on the Liffey is precisely the counterpart of Benares on the Ganges. The whole secret of relating mythology and the spiritual life to your environment is here involved. It is called *land-nam* by the

people in Iceland, land-claiming through naming the landscape. You read the land that you are living in as the holy land.<sup>66</sup>

This has been central to the literature of the Americas and is in many ways its distinctive quality.

Part Two of this study will examine in detail how the work of Harris and García Márquez has responded to myth as well as history in their attempts to reclaim inner as well as outer space. As I hope will be clear by the end of the study, this need to journey inwards to the infinite reaches of the collective consciousness is not confined to the Americas. In the words of R.D.Laing:

We respect the voyager, the explorer, the climber, the space man. It makes far more sense to me as a valid project - indeed as a desperately urgently required project for our time, to explore the inner space and time of consciousness.<sup>67</sup>

NOTES

Chapter 2) REALITY II: MYTH

(a) 'Flower and Song' of Amerindia

1. This figure sharply contrasts with the eighty million mentioned in Chapter 1 (a) and reflects, in part, the different sources used - Todorov's The Conquest of America in Chapter 1 and Brotherston's Image of the New World which provides much of the information here. No further research has been able to confirm a figure, however, and I have left the contradiction in the text to indicate the impossibility of ever obtaining accurate numbers.

2. See for example: C. Lévi-Strauss: The Raw and the Cooked. trans. John and Doreen Weightman (London: Penguin, 1992 [1964]).

3. The Aztecs Then and Now. p.60.

4. G. Reichel Dolmatoff: The Shaman and the Jaguar: A Study of Narcotic Drugs Among the Indians of Colombia (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1975), p.74.

5. *ibid.* p.180.

6. Wilson Harris: 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' collected in Explorations. p.39.

7. Translated by Gordon Brotherston in his Image of the New World: The American Continent Portrayed in Native Texts (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p.156.

8. Quoted in T. Todorov: The Conquest of America. p.84.

9. The growing interest in holistic medicine today has encouraged the rediscovery and re-evaluation of ancient herbal cures such as those of the Aztec and the Maya.

10. The *quipu*, a system of knotted cords, was calendrical in origin (*quipu* is related to *quilla*, month), and also used place-value notation. *Quipu* cords, of four main colours and variously twisted, expressed main items or 'nouns.' In Inca times the categorization implicit in the system lay not just within a single *quipu* but in the range of *quipus* used for different subjects or topics, the date of their compilation and their place of origin.

11. Galeano: Los Nacimientos. p.158.

12. See Open Veins. p.62 and The Aztecs Then and Now. p.116, for numerous examples.

(b) The Logic of Wings: Afro-American Realities

13. George Lamming: Natives of My Person (London: Allison and Busby, 1986 [1971]), p.111.

14. Hena Maes-Jelinek, in West Indian Literature, ed. Bruce King (London: Macmillan, 1979), p.182.
15. As Dabydeen points out in A Reader's Guide to West Indian and Black British Literature (Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1987), p.129, an owner who did not beat his/her slaves would be shown affection, sometimes lasting devotion, for the alternative was to end up being owned by someone more sadistic. Survival demanded a strategy of exhibiting affection and devotion. Apologists for slavery misinterpreted such devotion, arguing that blacks wanted to be slaves, that they were happily docile in the service of their masters and mistresses. Equiano's testimony offers "more subtle and poignant insight into a psychology of dependence based on the measure of kindness received in the midst of general cruelty."
16. The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa The African. Written by Himself [1789] abridged and edited by Paul Edwards: Equiano's Travels (Oxford: Heinemann, 1967), p.26.
17. *ibid.* p.30.
18. *ibid.* p.34.
19. *ibid.* p.5, p.10.
20. *ibid.* p.131.
21. Los nacimientos. p.317.
22. Alejo Carpentier: El reino de este mundo (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1978 [1949]), p.41.
23. *ibid.* p.33.
24. 'All God's Chillun Had Wings,' in The Book of Negro Folklore, eds. Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1958), p.62.
25. Vera M. Kutzinski: 'The Logic of Wings: Gabriel García Márquez and Afro-American Literature' in Latin American Literary Review, 13, no.25 (1985), 133-146.
26. Gabriel García Márquez: 'Un señor muy viejo con unas alas enormes' [1968] collected in La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada (Madrid: Mondadori, 1987 [1972]), pp.9-18, (p.17).
27. Lydia Cabrera: El monte. Igbo finda ewe orisha. vititi nfinda: Notas sobre las religiones, la magia, las supersticiones y el folklore de los negros criollos y del pueblo de Cuba (Havana: Ediciones C.R., 1954), p.9.
28. Jorge Amado: Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands, trans. Harriet de Onís (Serpent's Tail, 1986 [1966]), p.267.
29. *ibid.* p.101.
30. *ibid.* p.546.

31. *ibid.* p.548.
32. Earl Lovelace: The Dragon Can't Dance (Harlow: Longman, 1986 [1979]), see ch.8 entitled: 'To be Dragon and man.'
33. El reino de este mundo, p.142.
34. *ibid.* p.144.
35. Toni Morrison: Song of Solomon (London: Picador 1989 [1977]), on pp.332-333 Milkman realises the significance of the words spoken by Jake on previous occasions.
36. 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' in Explorations, p.33.
37. Richard L. Jackson: 'The Black Novel in Latin America Today' in Revista de literatura latinoamericana, 16, nos.2-3 (1987), 23-35.

(c) The Unconscious and Mythical Archetypes

38. Chapter 6 offers a reading of García Márquez' La increíble y triste historia . . . as a reversal of such static archetypes.
39. Christine Downing: 'Jung and Freud' in Women's Mysteries: Toward a Poetics of Gender (New York: Crossroad, 1992), pp.45-52.
40. Wilson Harris in interview with Alan Riach in The Radical Imagination: Lectures and Talks by Wilson Harris, eds. Riach and Williams (Liège: L<sup>e</sup> - Liège Language and Literature, 1992), pp.33-65 (p.62).
41. C. G. Jung: 'Sigmund Freud in His Historical Setting' in The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Ark, 1984), pp.33-40, (p.40).
42. Quoted in Jung: Selected Writings, ed. Anthony Storr (London: Fontana, 1983), p.22.
43. For a more detailed explanation of this process and of the terms in italics see Jung: Selected Writings, pp.97-98 [from 'Definitions' Psychological Types (1921)].
44. See Jung's clarification of what he means by 'individuation' in Jung: Selected Writings, pp.418-419. Though it can be translated as 'coming to selfhood' or 'self-realization' Jung emphasizes that this is much more than the coming of the ego into consciousness for "the self comprises infinitely more than a mere ego . . . It is as much one's self, and all other selves, as the ego. Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to one's self."
45. C. G. Jung: The Undiscovered Self, trans. R.F.C.Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p.9.
46. Jung: Selected Writings, p.211 [from 'The Aims of Psychotherapy' (1931)].



47. The constituents of matter, for instance, could be considered to behave as waves or particles depending on the choice of the observer. For more detailed explanation see Jonathan Powers: Philosophy and the New Physics (London: Methuen, 1982), pp.134-135.

48. When the Pope proclaimed the Assumption of the Virgin Mary as part of divine revelation in 1950, Jung considered it a significant step toward incorporating femininity into the image of the divine. He pointed out that the impulse to do this did not come from the ecclesiastical authorities but from the Catholic masses "who have insisted more and more vehemently on this development. Their insistence is, at bottom, the urge of the archetype to realize itself" (quoted in Jung: Selected Writings, p.27).

49. For comparison with the intuitive intellectual attitude of the East see Jung's example in Four Archetypes (London: Ark, 1986), p.37.

50. For Jung's distinction between the personal and collective unconscious see Jung: Selected Writings, p.425.

51. Storr's summary in Jung: Selected Writings, pp.15-16.

52. Jung: Selected Writings, p.65 [from 'Recent Thoughts on Schizophrenia' (1957)].

53. *ibid.* p.223 [from 'Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation' (1939)].

54. See C. G. Jung: Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London:Ark, 1985).

55. Jung developed his views from the work of other philosophers, especially that of Schopenhauer to whom he refers in Synchronicity, p.16.

56. Storr's summary in Jung: Selected Writings, p.20.

57. Four Archetypes, p.28.

58. Synchronicity, p.95.

59. *ibid.* pp.117-118.

60. *ibid.* p.118.

61. 'Psychology and Literature' in The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature, pp.84-105 (pp.97-98).

62. See Jung: Selected Writings, pp.126-127 [from 'The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairytales' (1945/8)].

63. See Sherry Turkle's reference to this in Psychoanalytic Politics: Jacques Lacan and Freud's French Revolution (London: Burnett Books, 1979), p.153.

64. The Undiscovered Self, p.104.

65. Wilson Harris: 'Oedipus and the Middle Passage' in Landfall, 43, 2 (June, 1989), 198-208, (p.203).

66. Joseph Campbell: Transformations of Myth Through Time (San Francisco: Harper and Rowe, 1990), p.98.

67. R. D. Laing: The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise (London: Penguin, 1990 [1967]), p.105.

Chapter 3) MARVELLOUS AMERICAN REALITY

(a) Magical Realism

The term 'magical realism' was first used by the European art critic, Franz Roh, in referring to post-expressionist paintings of the 1920's.<sup>1</sup> It has since become associated with a wide variety of Latin American writers in their response to what Carpentier has termed "lo real maravilloso americano,"<sup>2</sup> so that writers as divergent as Miguel Angel Asturias and Jorge Luis Borges are now unhelpfully defined by the same label. It is therefore necessary at this point to clarify the term, and the perspective through which it is viewed in this thesis, if it is to retain any critical use.

An emphasis on the spiritual journey is central to Carpentier's definition of magical realism. He conceived "lo real maravilloso" as a moment of awareness akin to poetic epiphany and based on a faith in the miraculous that allowed the writer to convey to his readers a vision of the fantastic features of reality. In his prologue to El reino de este mundo Carpentier observes:

lo maravilloso comienza a serlo de manera inequívoca cuando surge de una inesperada alteración de la realidad (el milagro), de una revelación privilegiada de la realidad, de una iluminación inhabitual o singularmente favorecedora de las inadvertidas riquezas de la realidad, de una ampliación de las escalas y categorías de la realidad, percibidas con particular intensidad en virtud de una exaltación del espíritu que lo conduce a un modo de estado límite.<sup>3</sup>

In the work of both Carpentier and Asturias this visionary quality is associated with the mythological which can transform and radically transpose reality. This is in marked contrast with Borges' Historia universal de la infamia (1935), sometimes cited as

the first work of magical realism,<sup>4</sup> which is more closely associated with the labyrinthine worlds of Franz Kafka and the stylistic innovations of modernists such as Joyce and Proust. For there is a huge difference between the view that tacitly assumes that reality itself is or may be fantastic, or that the imagination is autonomous (as is explored in Borges) and a perspective which takes seriously the religious beliefs or myths, the fantasies and rituals of the fictional characters by reproducing them.

For this reason, critics have usually made a distinction between magical realism and literature of the fantastic. Certain landmark publications such as the Antología de la literatura fantástica (1940), by Borges, Bioy Cesares and Silvina Ocampo, are seen to be in the latter tradition, stretching back more to late eighteenth century gothic and the beginnings of science fiction, than to the collision of cultures in the Americas and the need to define a specifically American reality. Other writings are less easy to distinguish and can contain elements of both genres. Enrique Anderson Imbert<sup>5</sup> points to the example of Carpentier's 'Viaje a la semilla,' categorized as a magical realist story, but in which the miraculous reversal of physical time is typical of the fantastic. Writers of different genres have also inspired and interacted with each other. Borges may be the acknowledged master of the fantastic but his multiple techniques and perspectives continue to influence the broader spectrum of experimental writing in the Americas. Neither does the commitment of Carpentier or Asturias to indigenous cultures preclude them drawing inspiration from the diverse innovations of the surrealist and modernist movements in Europe.

Literature of the fantastic is usually the antithesis of realism, whereas magical realism is more often a synthesis of the two and consequently dependent upon dialectical entities. In their

book Magical Realist Fiction. David Young and Keith Hollaman observe that at times:

. . . the intersecting in a magical realist story is large-scale, a colliding of cultures or civilizations, one primitive and hence in touch with magic, the other civilized and presumably realistic, i.e. committed to science and wary of illusion and superstition. It is important to recognise this collision in cultural terms because its very scale helps us understand that magical realism is not so much a challenge to the convention of literary realism, as it is to the basic assumptions of modern positivistic thought, the soil in which literary realism flourished.<sup>6</sup>

Amado's Dona Flor, for instance, is a sincere advocacy of paradoxical reality, with direct authorial references to 'magic,' and stylistic explorations of the visionary. The apparatus of literary realism remains intact, however, in the concrete depiction of character and event and clearly demarcated progression. To a greater or lesser degree, this is true of all magical realist fiction in which there is an attempt to respond to both history and myth, to outer, as well as inner, reality. Galeano's Los nacimientos is more unconventional in form and primarily concerned with exploring the Amerindian consciousness, but as the preface reveals, the impetus for the whole work is derived from the need to reinvestigate and recover an authentic history:

La pobre historia había dejado de respirar: traicionada en los textos académicos, mentida en las aulas, dormida en los discursos de efemérides . . .<sup>7</sup>

Through myth, analogy and oral storytelling Galeano recreates the Amerindian world, and through the tools of literary realism he draws on historical material to comment upon the destruction of that world.

The opposition between primitive and civilized cultures, contained in Young and Hollaman's definition of magical realism, is rarely the simple opposition of victim and victor. Though it is the intention of many of the writers in this study to rediscover and reactivate the repressed spaces of an indigenous ancestry, this does

not imply a blind allegiance to the ideology of the past nor even a belief in an altogether desirable state of affairs prior to the conquest. The magical realists referred to in this study are as sensitive to the negative and self-destructive aspects of the primitive cultures as they are committed to unravelling the distortions of history that have militated against them.

Rosario Castellanos, though intimately associated with the Mayan Indians of Chiapas, has been particularly concerned to eschew both the image of the "noble savage" of the Romantic period and the stereotyped victim of the later *indigenista* novels of social protest. She distances herself from the latter's Manichean concept of the world in which:

. . . the "good guys" are the Indians because they are the victims, and the "bad guys" are the whites because they have power, authority and money. I simply do not believe these patterns to be correct. Precisely what I have tried to do in all my books is prove those assumptions false, so that the essential ambiguity of the human being might come to light - along with the series of contradictions that prevail in all social relationships.<sup>e</sup>

The conflict between Indian and Ladino is at the heart of Castellanos' fiction but so too are those between male and female, upper and lower class, strong and weak, old and young, parent and child. The individual is characterised as a multifaceted being, the product of complex, and often interacting, conflicts and these conflicts are highlighted by contrasts of style. Castellanos remains primarily a realist, but in her attempt to penetrate the psychology and cosmology of the Indians she draws on such indigenous concepts as legends, mythical symbolism, the role of the supernatural in daily life and the Indian perception of cyclical time. Both Balún-Canán (1957). and Oficio de tinieblas (1962) bear witness to the negative effects of the Indian's beliefs and superstitions, his ceremonial alcoholism, and the interpersonal conflicts that are as much a part of the Indian community as they

are of the Ladino world. At the same time, both are a celebration of the Indian search for identity through myth and succeed in deconstructing the language of oppression in suggesting various levels of reality.

Juan Rulfo, a contemporary of Castellanos, writes more subjectively, more intensely from the perspective of the Indian in El llano en llamas (1953), but still evokes the violence, treachery and hypocrisy, which accompanies atrocious misery. His experimental novel, Pedro Páramo (1955), told from multiple viewpoints that transcend life and death, prefigured the great boom in Latin American prose writings and is recognised as a key influence for the stylistic innovations of later magical realists. It is interesting to note at this point that María Luisa Bombal's La amortajada, which predates Rulfo's novel by more than fifteen years, is spoken by a dead woman who reminisces about her life from infancy to death, and describes her death, wake, funeral and burial. Although anticipating much of Rulfo's experimental structure, Bombal has, until recently, remained on the margins of literary and critical discussion.

Publishing interest consequent on the Women's Movement has renewed awareness of influential early women writers and helped to focus the sense of 'femaleness' which is central to magical realism's challenge to traditional ways of thinking. A culture that gives pre-eminence to the rational and intellectual traditionally associates the female with the irrational and intuitive at the margins of acceptability. As analysis of texts in the second half of this chapter will reveal, the magical realist's exploration of marginalised identities deconstructs such polarities and becomes the search for the female principle to which the male tradition must be reconciled.

(b) Textual Analysis:

Hombres de maíz; The Bridge of Beyond;

La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde;

Hombres de maíz (1949) is an epic recreation of Guatemalan history, related through the subtle and complex layers of Mayan mythology, though structured on common mythical archetypes. In the opening epigraph: "Aquí la mujer, yo el dormido" Asturias immediately equates the quest for integration with the quest for the female principle. Woman placed in apposition to the sleeper expresses the presence of the Eternal feminine in man's unconscious. While the novel is a historical journey through time, through pre-scientific and scientific perspectives, it is also a psychological journey back to that dawn state of psychic wholeness in which the feminine, associated here with the intuitive and the magical, has not been repressed.

The pre-Conquest, primeval consciousness of the Maya is recreated through their own perspective and imagery. Without authorial intervention, Asturias immerses his text in the beliefs and rituals of his characters and from the opening descriptions it is clear that Hombres de maíz will vindicate the world of Llóm with extraordinary moral and imaginative power:

Al sol le salió el pelo. El verano fue recibido en los dominios del cacique de Llóm con miel de panal untada en las ramas de los árboles frutales, para que las frutas fueran dulces; tocoyales de siemprevivas en las cabezas de las mujeres, para que las mujeres fueran fecundas; y mapaches muertos colgados en las puertas de los ranchos, para que los hombres fueran viriles.

Los brujos de las luciérnagas, descendientes de los grandes entrechocadores de pedernales, hicieron siembra de luces con



chispas en el aire negro de la noche para que no faltaran estrellas guiadoras en el invierno. Los brujos de las luciérnagas con chispas de piedra de rayo. Los brujos de las luciérnagas, los que moraban en tiendas de piel de venada virgen.<sup>9</sup>

This passage is typical of the creative process of the novel in that it is not concerned with philosophizing or intellectual commentary; the polemic instead emerges out of the native vision itself. Through the visionary and the poetic Asturias celebrates the ultimate transcendent quality of the native consciousness:

El Gaspar Llóm apareció con el alba después de beberse el río para apagarse la sed del veneno en las entrañas. Se lavó las tripas, se lavó la sangre, se deshizo de su muerte, se la sacó por la cabeza, por los brazos igual que ropa sucia y la dejó ir en el río. (p.30)

But he does not sentimentalize the Mayan reality. The chapter entitled 'Venado de las Siete-rozas' is devoted to recreating the supernatural and hallucinatory elements of the native psyche, but the vision is also one of extreme violence with its cycle of tribal attacks and bloody revenge. This serves as an accurate presentation of Maya and Quiché history as it is written down in the Popol Vuh and other sacred works. Asturias offers no sense of why the quarrel started in these episodes,<sup>10</sup> no logical rationalization, just the ritual of revenge and renewal which seems to act as a symbolic outlet for states of consciousness no longer apparent in the more suppressed contemporary psyche.

In the earlier stages of the novel there is no conflict between pre-scientific and scientific perspectives. Events are related as they would effect the pre-conquest indigenous psyche. The wilful burning of corn, for instance, is described as a horrific and violent act as it is an act against the supreme deity of the Mayans.<sup>11</sup> As the novel progresses, the myths and beliefs of the Mayan people become superimposed by elements of Christianity, and with the immigration of a European society the native consciousness

comes under sceptical scrutiny. Doña Elda, for instance, holds the rigidly scientific view that the myths and legends of the Mayans are something exotic but do not actually exist:

Doña Elda, su esposa, trataba de calmarlo, haciéndole ver que no se llevara de leyendas, que las leyendas se cuentan, pero no suceden más que en la imaginación de los poetas, creídas por los niños y vueltas a creer por las abuelas. (p.234) Her husband

replies that this is an absurd, materialistic view and he and Asturias condemn the European who denies the magical, mythical reality of a once powerful race:

Doña Elda aceptaba que las leyendas de Alemania eran verdaderas; pero no las de aquel pobre lugar de indios "chuj" y ladinos calzados y piojosos. Con el dedo, como en el cañón de un pistola, apuntaba don Deféric hacia el pecho de su mujer, acusándola de tener mentalidad europea. Los europeos son unos "estúpidos," piensan que sólo Europa ha existido, y que lo que no es Europa, puede ser interesante como planta exótica, pero no existe. (p.234)

As don Deféric later says: "Desaparecieron los dioses, pero quedaron las leyendas . . . " (p.237) Years of conquest and exploitation have left the Mayans dispossessed and repressed, but their original myths and legends live on in the collective consciousness of their descendants - as the old woman explains to Hilario Sacayón: "vos recordaste en tu borrachera lo que la memoria de tus antepasados dejó en tu sangre" (p.241) - culminating in the final triumphant manifestation of the mythical essence of the opening pages:

¡María la Luvia, es la Lluvia! ¡La Piojosa Grande es la Lluvia! A sus espaldas de mujer de cuerpo de aire, de solo aire, y de pelo, mucho pelo, solo pelo, llevaba a su hijo, hijo también del Gaspar Llóm, el hombre de Llóm, llevaba a su hijo el maíz, el maíz de Llóm, y erguida estará en el tiempo que está por venir, entre el cielo, la tierra, y el vacío. (p.350)

This triumph is the triumph of psychic reintegration, of reunion with the feminine. The opening pages related the flight of the female principle, through the figure of La Piojosa Grande, and this final passage announces her return. The sorcerer declares that La Piojosa Grande is María la Lluvia who holds in her arms her son and Gaspar's, the corn. Interpreted, this means that she is the rain

goddess who to the Maya is Ximucané, the moon; her son, the corn, is Hunahpú, which makes Gaspar the sun. Sun and moon are the supreme gods of the Maya whose religion is based on the cultivation and deification of maize. In this way the novel and its characters remain anchored in Mayan mythology while at the same time suggesting the archetypal spiritual journey and the nature of psychic wholeness.

The women in Simone Schwarz-Bart's The Bridge of Beyond (1972)<sup>12</sup> are more physical, more concretely realistic characters, though there is still this same image of woman as a link with the unseen world and as source of spiritual values. Telumee's grandmother, Queen Without a Name, lives in the village of Fond-Zombi:

Queen Without a Name's cabin was the last in the village; it marked the end of the world of human beings and looked as if it were leaning against the mountain. (p.28)

Fond-Zombi is itself a carefully chosen name meaning a valley bottom peopled by spirits or ghosts. It is here, nurtured by her grandmother, that Telumee becomes acquainted with the spirits of her ancestors and her own role in a collective Creole consciousness.

Life in Fond-Zombi revolves around a rich oral culture and Schwarz-Bart's language is characterized by the comic and subversive wit of Creole proverbs and folk-wisdom:

Woe to him who laughs once and gets into the habit, for the wickedness of life is limitless: if it gives you your heart's desire with one hand, it is only to trample on you with both feet and let loose on you that madwoman bad luck, who seizes and rends you and scatters your flesh to the crows. (p.11)

The novel renders the consciousness of a Creole speaker not by creolized dialogue or footnotes, but by sustaining the strangeness of an unfamiliar world-view. The awkward distinction between Standard English and dialect that separated the narrative voice and characters of early Caribbean novels is replaced by an autobiographical narrator who also participates in oral story-

telling forms. In this way, the reader gains an insight into Telumee's personal experience as well as the collective responses of a whole community for whom she becomes the messenger.

It is particularly through song that memory survives and is communicated:

She knew old slave songs, too, and I used to wonder why, as she murmured those, Grandmother handled my hair even more gently than before, as if they turned her fingers liquid with pity. . . I listened to the heartrending voice, to its mysterious appeal and the waters of my mind began to be troubled, especially when grandmother sang:

Mama where is where is where is Idahe  
She is sold and sent away Idahe  
She is sold and sent away Idahe. (p.31)

These lyrics are typical of the way in which Schwarz-Bart makes the distant and painful, real and immediate. Hers is a specifically female focus - a woman writer, giving voice to the mothers and grandmothers, intuiting the panoramic and epic out of the small, the personal, and the domestic. Water imagery - "her fingers liquid with pity," "the waters of my mind" - the archetypal female element, is used throughout the novel to suggest the erosion, or the sublimation, of the personal into the wider, collective whole. There are constant references to the unburdening of the personal into the collective:

I would sing as I worked, and when I sang I diluted my pain, chopped it in pieces, and it flowed into the song . . . (p.60)

and after a period of extreme withdrawal and personal grief it is that collective whole which revives Telumee:

Suddenly I felt the waters of the drum flow over my heart and give it life again, at first in little damp notes, then in great falls that sprinkled and baptized me as I whirled in the middle of the circle. (p.145)

The central relationship in the novel is that between Telumee and her grandmother. The text suggests so strong a bond of love and continuity between them that the two figures almost fuse into one, hinting at reincarnation, as in African belief. A concept of time

as cyclical rather than linear underlies the recurring patterns in these two lives. Telumee is led across the Bridge of Beyond as a child, symbolising a first stage towards inheriting Toussine's powers. The last stage occurs when she in turn goes to live with Ma Cia, Toussine's old friend, who is not only skilled in healing arts, but "closer to the dead than to the living." (p.33) Ma Cia extends the spiritual side of the portrait of the grandmother and figures in half-magical episodes which build bridges between this novel and the world of Afro-american myth.<sup>13</sup> As the novel progresses and Telumee draws closer to the status of high priestess the text becomes more closely intertwined with aspects of the supernatural that transcend European rationality. Queen Without a Name departs and reappears as the rose-coloured sky. Ma Cia metamorphoses into a black dog. Telumee continues to live with and love the dead Amboise until they both decide to separate their spirits through ritual. Connecting all these episodes is the strength and power of the collective consciousness which binds and makes sense of all. As Telumee approaches her own dying she contemplates the cruel injustice suffered by her people and looks beyond Fond-Zombi, beyond Guadeloupe, through the horrors of the Middle Passage, to once again assert the power of memory and rebirth:

Then I get up, and by my moonlight lamp I look through the shadows of the past at the market, the market where my people stand, and I lift the lamp higher to look for the face of my ancestor. And all the faces are the same, and all are mine, and I go searching, and I keep walking around them till they are sold, bleeding, racked, alone. I shine my lamp into every dark corner, I go all over this strange market, and I see that heaven's gift to us is that we should have our head thrust into, held down in, the murky water of scorn, cruelty, pettiness and treachery. But I also see that we are not drowned in it. We have struggled to be born and we have struggled to be born again . . . (p.169)

This recovery of history, of tradition, through the mythical and collective is also the final victory in Omar Cabezas' La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estapa verde (1982). Though a guerilla

narrative, written for the most part in clear and concise realistic prose, Cabezas' novel is suggestive of the larger framework and points to the need for inner, psychical as well as outer, historical change.

In his epic ¿Te dió miedo la sangre? (1977) Sergio Ramirez quotes from Aristophanes' The Birds as an epigraph to his novel:

La alondra nació antes que todos los seres y que la misma tierra. Su padre murió de enfermedad cuando la tierra aun no existía. Permaneció cinco días insepulto, hasta que la alondra, ingeniosa por la fuerza de la necesidad, enterró a su padre en su cabeza.<sup>14</sup>

The phrase "enterro a su padre en su cabeza" is richly connotative of the psychical state of Nicaragua and Nicaraguan people before and up to revolutionary triumph. In La montaña this "padre" is met head on and the oppression exorcised. As Carlos Fuentes says in a foreword to the English translation, the novel is "a freeing of the humours of the Latin American body and mind as we face our perennial quandary: we must go forward because the present is unjust and insufferable, but we cannot kill the past in doing so, for the past is part of our identity, and without our identity we are nothing."<sup>15</sup> Central to this recovery of identity is communication with an indigenous past, through communicating universal patterns of continuity which universalize the revolutionary process. In Subtiava, for instance, Cabezas explains how the Frente related to the indigenous peoples by presenting Sandino as the incarnation of Adioc, their own great historical leader, making further connections until:

no era sólo en la calle Real que iban marchando, sino que marchaban sobre América Latina, sobre los Andes. Sobre la historia, sobre el futuro, pero con un paso firme, seguro.<sup>16</sup>

But before Cabezas can join in this collective march he must undergo the various trials of his own personal quest, through which he can begin to intuit the process of discovery and rebirth:

. . . vas también pensando y repensando y recordando imágenes de donde venís, imágenes del misterio que vas a desentrañar, y sentís que lo vas a desentrañar a golpe, a golpe de corazón, a golpe de tiro, a golpe de chimón a golpe de pulmón . . . (pp.91-91)

This process is not an easy one and Cabezas' new man is also born of a 'violently dialectical womb:'

El hombre nuevo empieza a nacer con hongos, con los pies engusanados, el hombre nuevo empieza a nacer con soledad, el hombre nuevo empieza a nacer picado de zancudos, el hombre nuevo empieza a nacer hediondo. Ésa es la parte de afuera, porque por dentro, a fuerza de golpes violentos todos los días, viene naciendo el hombre con la frescura de la montaña . . . (p.119)

The process of a break-up of the known substances in a character's life under the weight of an intuition of something beyond complacent existence is a crucial stage in the individual psychical journey. Cabezas feels this disintegration when he sees his home for the first time after so long in the mountains:

Se me dio un choque entre el presente y el pasado. Yo no estaba claro en cuál de los dos estaba; es decir, si en mi espacio finito yo estaba poseyendo mi tiempo pasado, o mi tiempo presente, o si estaban metidos los dos dentro de mí . . . (p.280)

Harris has described this process as "a revelation of the partial ground on which we stand"<sup>17</sup> and this is a disturbing realization for Cabezas:

Yo nunca sospeché que me iba a causar tanto dolor ese encontronazo violento del presente con el pasado, esa ruptura en que toma conciencia de mi nueva calidad. (p.281)

It is through his experiences in the mountain that Cabezas becomes conscious of this new quality, as the mountain itself becomes a mythical force. After Tello's death the mountain is described as being fearful also:

Como que se metió en miedo también la montaña. Se calmó el viento de la montaña y los árboles dejaron de mecarse y hubo una quietud, una calma sobrecogedora . . . recuerdo que los árboles dejaron de besarse, no se movía una hoja y semejantes árboles tan altos, el monte agachado y no se movía una hoja, como que se le había caído la coraza a la montaña . . . Y los pájaros dejaron de cantar, como que se habían ido por temor . . . todo se volvió tétrico esperando el momento que llegaran y nos mataran a toditos. (p.161)

This mythical persona then becomes specifically female in character. In reference to the novel's title, the mountain is something more than a great expanse of green because the mountain is the spirit of the female, the 'other' which the struggling guerilla at first fears will betray him:

. . . porque a mí me daba la impresión de que ella empezaba a discernir, empezaba a pensar, como que una fuerza interna hacía que ella pensara y que tomara partido y discerniera . . . ¿a cuenta de qué esta cabrona? (p.169)

but gradually realises is faithful to the heroic Tello:

. . . Tello podía ser un símbolo para la montaña, porque vivía con ella. Estoy seguro que vivió con ella, que tuvo relaciones con ella, le parió hijos a Tello . . . (p.170)

The mountain, Cabezas tells us, had given up when Tello died, but then, through the continued struggles of the other guerillas:

. . . como que siente que Tello no es el fin del mundo, ni sus comienzos, que ha sido su hijo. Que Tello fue su hijo, aunque haya sido su vida, aunque haya sido su hermano, su animal, su piedra, aunque Tello haya sido su río. Ella se tuvo que dar cuenta que Tello no era el fin del mundo. Ella tenía que darse cuenta que Tello era el comienzo del mundo, porque después de él veníamos todos nosotros con los dientes crispados, con las piernas amarradas, con lesmaniasis, con los dedos arrugados puestos sobre el gatillo, con las mochilas cargadas, que le podíamos prender fuego en su corazón. (pp.170-171)

The mountain sensitizes Cabezas,<sup>10</sup> and as his struggles become bound with the mythical forces of nature, and with the 'femininity' of his own nature, his sensibility is raised to new heights, his feelings at times articulated through an almost visionary prose.<sup>12</sup> It is the meeting with don Leandro, the old Sandinista, which finally connects Cabezas' inner, psychical journey to the larger spiritual journey of Nicaragua, which underpins the guerilla struggle. The old man is himself a mythical figure, untouched by the fixed chronology of linear time, and still reliving his own struggles with General Sandino:

Para él, ese momento que estuvo guardado y se hizo viejo fue un instante de 40 años. (p.283)

He is the living manifestation of T.S.Eliot's words:



We are born with the dead:  
See, they return, and bring us with them.  
The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree  
Are of equal duration.<sup>20</sup>

and the final link in Cabezas' revolutionary transformation:

. . . yo había encontrado la historia a través de él, me había reencontrado con mi propia historia, con la tradición, con la esencia de Nicaragua, encontré mi génesis, mi antepasados, me sentí continuación concreta, ininterrumpida . . . sentí que no era hijo sólo de una teoría elaborada, sino que estaba pisando sobre lo concreto, me dio raíz en la tierra, me fijó al suelo, a la historia. (p.288)

The range of writing which could usefully be explored under the title of "lo real maravilloso" is so wide and diverse as to make attempts at focusing on exemplary texts impossible. It has not been my intention to suggest the above texts as typical of the genre, but rather to highlight how texts apparently so very different in form and content converge in prioritizing certain values and perspectives which make for a radical post-colonial critique of the nature of identity and of reality. In this way, magical realism is less a quantifiable set of generic techniques than it is a frame of mind which, in responding to both history and myth, to the need for inner, as well as outer change, has begun to see through centuries of oppression to the re-integration of a fractured psyche.

NOTES

Chapter 3) MARVELLOUS AMERICAN REALITY

(a) Magical Realism

1. Franz Roh: Nach-Expressionismus (Magister Realismus). Leipsig, 1925, [translated into Spanish by Fernando Vela as Realismo mágico, Madrid, 1927].
2. Alejo Carpentier: 'De lo real maravilloso americano' in Tientos y diferencias (Montevideo: Arca, 1967), pp.102-120.
3. *ibid.* p.116.
4. See eg. Angel Flores: 'Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction' in Hispania. 37 (1955), 187-201.
5. Enrique Anderson Imbert: El realismo mágico y otros ensayos (Caracas: Monte Avila, 1977), pp.16-17.
6. Magical Realist Fiction. eds. David Young and Keith Hollaman (New York: Longman, 1984), p.3.
7. Galeano: Los nacimientos, p.xv.
8. Cited in Another Way To Be: Selected Works of Rosario Castellanos. ed. and trans. by Myralyn F. Allgood (Univ. of Georgia Press, 1990), p.xxvi.

(b) Textual Analysis

9. Miguel Angel Asturias: Hombres de maiz (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1986 [1949]), p.24.
10. see eg. pp.69-70.
11. *ibid.* p.47.
12. First published in French as Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle (Editions du Seuil, 1972), translated by Barbara Bray as The Bridge of Beyond (references are to Heinemann, Caribbean Writers Series, edition, 1982). In her introduction to the translated edition Bridget Jones points out that some of the specificity of local names, and some uses of Creole dialect are lost in the translation which uses Standard English where it might have used a variety of Caribbean English, though she acknowledges it on the whole as "an unusually good translation." (p.xiv).
13. see eg. pp.33-34, pp.130-131.
14. Sergio Ramirez: ¿Te dio miedo la sangre? (Caracas: Monte Avila Editores, 1977).

15. Omar Cabezas: La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde 1982, trans. Kathleen Weaver as Fire From the Mountain (London: Cape, 1985), foreword by Carlos Fuentes, p.ix.
16. La montaña (Lima: Valpa Editores, 1987), pp.58-60, (p.60), all future quotations from this edition.
17. Wilson Harris: Carnival (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), p.32.
18. La montaña. p.140.
19. See eg. p.258.
20. T.S. Eliot: 'Little Gidding' (section v) in Four Quartets in The Collected Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p.197.

PART TWO:

'TEXTS'

Chapter 4) DRAMAS OF TRANSITION

(a) Wilson Harris

(1) Transitional Discourses

Harris is concerned as much with the reading process as he is with writing and as a literary critic reveals the same rigour and multivalency in his readings of texts that he does in his writing. In keeping with his own unique brand of post-structuralism Harris prioritizes the text, the multiplicity of meanings contained in any one text, and the necessity of the reader to read in continuously changing ways in order to generate those meanings. After his own novels are published, Harris does not claim control as 'writer' but rather embarks on a process of re-readings, keenly aware of shifts of emphasis and the drawing of connections beyond his conscious intention.' These lines sprung from unconscious/subconscious memory Harris refers to as 'intuitive clues':

I interpret "intuitive clue" as implying that the visible text . . . runs in concert with an invisible text that secretes a corridor into the future . . . <sup>2</sup>

As a literary critic<sup>3</sup> Harris has been particularly interested in transitional discourses, in texts he judges to be conservative or reactionary but which conceal a struggle, at the level of form, with the constraints of realism and the pressure to confirm polarised identities. He sees Edgar Allan Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket, for instance, as "one of the first major tormented monoliths to appear in American fiction."<sup>4</sup> In his essay 'The

Schizophrenic Sea'<sup>5</sup> Harris argues that while Poe consciously defends the institution of slavery in the nineteenth century, the text itself undercuts that defence to suggest its future extinction:

The schizophrenic genius of Edgar Allan Poe in this strange narrative helps us to begin to perceive the decay of order conditioned by conquest; that order begins to review its daylight deeds, made sacrosanct by institutional codes, in the night-time rebellious dream life of the half-conscious and unconscious psyche.<sup>6</sup>

Harris similarly reads Heart of Darkness in relation to "the pressures of form which engaged Conrad's imagination to transform biases grounded in homogeneous premises."<sup>7</sup> He is sympathetic to Chinua Achebe's criteria in reading the novel as a racist dehumanisation of Africans<sup>8</sup> but views this reading as itself the product of African tradition which tends towards homogeneous imperatives. Because his own South American context is more intent on "confessions of partiality"<sup>9</sup> Harris finds it possible to view Heart of Darkness as a frontier novel, in the sense that it "stands upon a threshold of capacity to which Conrad pointed though he never attained that capacity himself."<sup>10</sup>

In both Explorations and The Vomb of Space, in which the above essays are collected, Harris' perspective is cross-cultural with writers ranging from Carpentier and Rulfo to Soyinka and Okigbo and readings which perceive synchronicity between texts as a result of bridges of myth that run through distinct cultural contexts.<sup>11</sup> It is this same diversity and eclecticism in his writings which on the whole deter critics from defining any concrete set of literary influences for Harris. Nevertheless, the influence of Melville and Faulkner has been suggested<sup>12</sup> and I would like to make brief reference to these writers before making a specific study of Harris' Heartland in relation to Hudson's Green Mansions and Carpentier's Los pasos perdidos as dramas of transition.

Herman Melville (1819-1891) is noted for the radically, self-consciously literary nature of his writings, characterised by a constant overlaying of ideas, images, meanings, references. Though deliberately allusive and defying ultimate interpretation, Melville searches in all his novels (most epically in Moby Dick, 1851), the deepest dreams and obsessions of mankind, exploring through his imagery the confusion of good and evil and constantly blurring the guidelines, the landmarks of conventional perception. In Benito Cereno (1855) the drama played between black and white is literally blacks and whites: Americans and Spaniards on one side, Negroes on the other. As always the symbolism (of Black Friars in a whitewashed monastery, of a white nobby in the tops and a dark satyr on the stern, of black and white pawns, of the Nubian sculptor and his white statue-head) is resolved in an indeterminate grey - grey sky, grey fowl, leaden waves, the grey vapours of the opening. In this short novel the irony is stacked against the figure of Delano, his Yankee gullibility and inability to perceive due to corrosive double standards and a self-deluding hypocrisy. The phrase:

. . . here was evinced the unhealthy climax of that icy though conscientious policy . . . transforming the man into a block, or rather into a loaded cannon'<sup>3</sup>

points to the nightmare that tormented Melville - a character locked into a block function, unable to do anything else but exercise that function, incapable of reading the world in any other way.

Bartleby (1853) is in this way a challenge to the reader in his/her attempts to 'make sense' of the elusive scrivener who occupies centre stage. The archetypal marginalised figure, Bartleby's reply of "I would prefer not" to every manner of request is strangely compelling, his private and silent retreat behind the screen a direct challenge to the conventions and expectations of society. Harris sees in Bartleby the embodiment of Melville's

dilemma as an artist:

Bartleby gradually relinquishes all communication with the society in which he lives. He is given various functions to perform and he steps away from them into a field of the unconscious. Bartleby is one of Melville's major short novels in which he expresses a profound dissatisfaction with the vocabulary of his age.<sup>14</sup>

Harris refers to Melville as coming to a frontier and addressing a deep-seated problem - how to say certain things which he finds himself unable to say, how to explore a reality that cannot be circumscribed by the conventions of realism. But it is not, perhaps, until Faulkner that America finds a writer able to respond to this challenge as he chronicles the disintegration of a society through the disintegration of form.

The stylistic innovations of William Faulkner (1897-1962) are well documented: the breakdown of linear time sequence, the telling of a story from multiple and often conflicting perspectives, the translation of the stream of consciousness technique into the vernacular of the American South, the strategy of delay, the constant dissolving of the concrete and tangible through the use of imagery. As a modernist Faulkner consciously experimented with form, and although some of his characteristics are the influence of fellow modernists such as Joyce and Proust, he is defined by his allegiance to place and his influence on fellow American writers cannot be underestimated.<sup>15</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, however, Faulkner is more relevant to the writings of García Márquez than he is to Wilson Harris and this relationship will be explored in more detail in the second half of this chapter. Harris himself points to "Faulkner's difficulty in relinquishing a conviction of territorial conscription of moral imperative"<sup>16</sup> and locates his struggles between outsiders and insiders, minority and majority cultures, in legacies of conquest which continue to reinforce implicit polarisations. Nevertheless, I would like to quote the



following passage from The Sound and the Fury (1929) as typical of Faulkner's poetic evocation of his subject and gradual breakdown of linear narrative, and to suggest, at least in part, an antecedent for Harris' own journeys through the fragmentation of psyche:

This was where I saw the river for the last time this morning, about here. I could feel water beyond the twilight, smell. When it bloomed in the spring and it rained the smell was everywhere you didn't notice it so much at other times but when it rained the smell began to come into the house at twilight either it would rain more at twilight or there was something in the light itself but it always smelled strongest then until I would lie in bed thinking when will it stop when will it stop. The draught in the door smelled of water, a damp steady breath. Sometimes I could put myself to sleep saying that over and over until after the honeysuckle got all mixed up in it the whole thing came to symbolize night and unrest I seemed to be lying neither asleep nor awake looking down a long corridor of grey half-light where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical all I had done shadows all I had felt suffered taking visible form antic and perverse mocking without relevance inherent themselves with the denial of the significance they should have affirmed thinking I was I was not who was not was not who.'

The "long corridor of grey half-light" is reminiscent of Melville and his attempts to create a nebulous landscape of uncertainty and indeterminacy. The erosion of character and of identity is more forthright, however, the fracture taking place at the level of form as well as content so that only through the senses, and especially that of smell, does a connection with reality persist. The dissolving of all stable things into "shadowy paradoxical" directly parallels the journeys of transition undertaken by Harris in Heartland and García Márquez in his early stories.

(ii) Journeys of Transition/ Into the Unconscious

The sense of loss and deprivation voiced by Quentin in The Sound and the Fury<sup>18</sup> is not for Harris simply a ground for protest, recrimination and satire. It is visualized through the agents in his works as an ambivalent condition of helplessness and self-discovery, the starting point for new and radical social and emotional structures. In this way Heartland (1964) is a novel of transition, an exploration between two worlds in an attempt to renounce one consciousness and integrate into another. Harris' journey into the interior has been compared to Conrad's in Heart of Darkness<sup>19</sup> but the forest in Heartland is much more than a symbol corresponding to, but not directly involved in, man's inner development. A more appropriate context in which to read the novel is in relation to fellow American novelists W.H. Hudson, in Green Mansions, and Alejo Carpentier, in Los pasos perdidos.

Hudson's Green Mansions (1904) is very much the product of its time and shares many of its historical biases. The novel's title immediately announces an Anglo-american tradition<sup>20</sup> - the 'man-made' image of the forest, pointing to nature as an extension of the self, with the firm sense of man in control - in contrast with the Latin American tradition evident in Heartland and Los pasos perdidos where the forest is symbolic of an inner journey, and nature is infinitely more problematic and larger than self. At the level of text, however, Hudson's 'visible' discourse is deconstructed and fragmented by the nature of Abel's journey which seems to take place almost in spite of the author's intentions and out of which a half-

shattered historical ego emerges to create a new sense of self.

As Abel leaves a devastated Caracas to seek gold in the hinterland he is every inch the adventurer, tracing the path of Columbus:

Every man and woman in that place, they assured me had such a necklet. This report inflamed my mind to such a degree that I could not rest by night or day for dreaming golden dreams, and considering how to get to that rich district, unknown to civilised men.<sup>21</sup>

Like Columbus, he finds no gold but is radically transformed by the search that takes him "outside the pale of civilisation." (p.211) Travelling through the interior Abel meets all manner of roustabout and fugitive but the Indians, who feed and guide him, he loathes with pathological intensity. This is one aspect of Abel's bias - his belief in the superiority of his own civilisation and the 'savagery' of primitive cultures. His description of the fiancée he has left behind reveals a further contradiction addressed by the text:

A daughter of civilisation and of that artificial life, she could never experience such feelings as these and return to nature as I was doing. For women, though within narrow limits more plastic than men, are yet without that larger adaptiveness which can take us back to the sources of life, which they have left eternally behind. Better, far better for both of us that she should wait through the long, slow months, growing sick at heart with hope deferred; that, seeing me no more, she should weep my loss, and be healed at last by time, and find love and happiness again in the old way, in the old place. (p.138)

For the figure of Rima, the child of nature who is both the source of Abel's transformation and the object of his love, is both Indian and female. It is tempting to read, in such a closely observed portrait of the conventions that confined women to severely conscripted roles, an ironic comment by Hudson on the limitations of his society. Certainly it is difficult to reconcile so supercilious an attitude with the genuine flights of transcendence and grasp of beauty inspired by both the jungle and Rima. But Hudson does not consciously address this contradiction, presenting Rima rather as

something 'other' and attempting to create in her an evolutionary model of refinement. Within the text, however, we can see that Rima has her roots in Cla-Cla, the old native woman whose discordant music is a prelude to Rima's bird-song. Rima's closest bond, and constant thought, is to the memory of her mother and to a lost tribe which is perpetuated in her use of bird-language. Though Hudson's direct comment on the inadequacy of language,<sup>22</sup> it is Rima's heightened form of communication that ultimately connects her to a past and to a culture that Abel must learn.

The manner of Rima's death - burnt alive as she hides in a tree<sup>23</sup> - is the cause of Abel's brutal thirst for vengeance and consequent breakdown. Harris has drawn attention to the unconscious parallels between this event and the creation myths of the Arawak and Macusi tribes which Abel so consciously loathes:

In the ladder of fire Macusi and Arawak creation myths visualize the fierce Caribs in pursuit of the gentle Arawaks who climb the food-bearing tree and are in a position there to hold off their pursuers but the Caribs set fire to the tree. The Arawaks blaze into sparks and fly up to heaven where they become the Pleiades.

It is this creation myth which throws much light on the significance of Rima. She too ascends to heaven like an implicit constellation and the scarecrow ash which Abel collects at the base of the ladder or tree and takes back to civilisation is symbolic of catastrophe as an inevitable ingredient in regenerative psyche and muse . . .<sup>24</sup>

Rima returns to Abel throughout his breakdown at various levels of imagery, most notably as a moth,<sup>25</sup> and re-enacts this death-into-life drama. Significantly, Abel's deepest point of contact with the unconscious is signalled when he says that "the creations of the Indian imagination had now become as real to me as anything in nature." (p.318) The self that emerges from this point of contact is one that has learnt from Rima and, "self-forgiven and self-absolved," (p.323) succeeds, at least partially, in transcending the dualism that had chained him to despair:

Heaven itself, she said, could not undo that which I had done;  
and she also said that if I forgave myself Heaven would say no

word, nor would she. That is my philosophy still: prayers, austerities, good works - they avail nothing, and there is no intercession, and outside of the soul there is no forgiveness in heaven or earth for sin. Nevertheless there is a way, which every soul can find out for itself . . . (p.323)

Written nearly fifty years later, the path which Carpentier's protagonist retraces in Los pasos perdidos (1953) is a more sophisticated, more self-conscious psychological journey. Stylistically, with its six stages of decreation, the novel resembles the reverse scenario of the first week of genesis reproduced in Harris' novels such as Palace of the Peacock (1960) and The Secret Ladder (1963). In the first stage Carpentier's nameless protagonist is a part of the citified dissociation from nature,<sup>26</sup> living in a world of art - but art cut off from all life.<sup>27</sup> The Shelleyan epigraph to the second stage - "Ha! I scent life!" - heralds the beginning of his quest for psychic wholeness as this man produced of two cultures leaves New York to journey into the Venezuelan interior in search of his Latin American origins. Once away from society and its restrictive criteria Carpentier's protagonist becomes sensitized again:

Me quedé solo contemplando el fuego. Hacía mucho tiempo que no contemplaba el fuego. (p.150)

Mouche, his travelling companion, is too much the product of genteel society and feels alienated in this hazardous and primitive land, whereas he begins to 'live' his surroundings:

Pero ahora, sentado en esta piedra, vivo el silencio; un silencio venido de tan lejos, espeso de tantos silencios, que en él cobraría la palabra un fragor de creación. (p.173)

This process of becoming sensitized by and integrated into nature resembles Carpentier's conception of magical realism as the character's sudden awareness and appreciation of the fantastic features of reality:

y encima de todo, como si lo asombroso de abajo fuera poco, yo descubría un nuevo mundo de nubes; esas nubes tan distintas, tan propias, tan olvidadas por los hombres, que todavía se amasan

sobre la humedad de las inmensas selvas, ricas en agua como los primeros capítulos de Génesis; nubes hechas como de un mármol desgastado, rectas en su base, y que se dibujaban hasta tremendas alturas, inmóviles, monumentales . . . (p.229)

This integration is furthered by his relationship with Rosario who revives and helps to re-create his identity. Even the sound of his name seems so new "como si acabara de ser creada" (p.216) when spoken by Rosario. Most importantly, it is her affinity to the past which connects him with his lost roots:

Comprendí por qué la que era ahora mi amante me había dado una tal impresión de raza, el día que la viera regresar de la muerte a la orilla de un alto camino. Su misterio era emanación de un mundo remoto, cuya luz y cuyo tiempo no me eran conocidos. (p.234)

Through Rosario, through surviving the two tests<sup>26</sup> of the journey, the protagonist/narrator approaches the brink of the supremely dialectical dawn state of psychic wholeness:

Estamos en el mundo del Génesis, al fin del Cuarto Día de la Creación. Si retrocediéramos un poco más, llegaríamos adonde comenzara la terrible soledad del creador - la tristeza sideral de los tiempos sin incienso y sin alabanzas, cuando la tierra era desordenada y vacía, y las tinieblas estaban sobre la haz del abismo. (p.247)

But ultimate integration eludes him as Carpentier is finally unable to shed the historical biases with which he has clothed the novel. Despite his condemnation of society at the opening of the novel, blindly conforming to aesthetic criteria of the moment and incapable of forming a valid opinion, he himself remains a part of this very elitist, pseudo-artistic world. Throughout the novel he speaks in the language and style of these elitist groups, constantly making references to specific works of art which he neither explains nor whose spirit he attempts to convey, merely assuming that the reader would be familiar with such works. Even as late as Ch.XXX Carpentier contrives a specific musicologist idiom which inhibits the universalizing of the exploratory journey.

The genuine quest for psychic integration is also hindered by

the stilted portraits of the women in the novel. Ruth, the wife of the central character, is the stereotyped career woman unaware that she is living in an empty marriage and who, it is later revealed, really yearns to be a wife and mother. Mouche, the mistress, is the vapid poseur who is suddenly revealed to be quite false once her make-up has faded in the jungle. These two, the products of a society from which Carpentier wishes to escape, are contrasted with Rosario, the indigenous woman, who is part of this 'other' life which grows out of the natural and primeval rhythms of the earth and is generated through myth and vision. But Rosario, this "mujer de tierra," (p.241) is unconvincing when she defines herself as "tu mujer" (pp.241-242) and devotes herself to serving this stranger from another civilisation. Carpentier's praising of the naturalness and simple beauty of Rosario in serving "her man" sound more like an inability to cope with the independence of women in his own society, than a discovery of the true virtues of the native Indian.

The ambiguity at the close of the novel, where the protagonist stands on the bridge from one civilisation to another, is in the end consistent. Rosario vanishes when the ladder of water closes over foundations of the shaman, in the same way as the ladder of fire arises and separates Rima from Abel. Nevertheless, in their respective journeys through the Venezuelan interior, both Green Mansions and Los pasos perdidos suggest the nature of the psychological and spiritual journey that must be undertaken if the self-created self is to emerge from the historical ego to finally cross the bridge from one civilisation/state of consciousness to another, as Stevenson must in Heartland.

In the opening epigraph to his novel Harris announces his intention immediately:

The rocks will melt, the sealed horizons fall and the places  
Our hearts have hid in will be viewed by strangers. 29

Intent on psychic exploration, and in a style reminiscent of Faulkner, Heartland opens with a process of disintegration, evoking in the image of the swimmers the predicament of man in a world of flux:

The solid morning mist began to disintegrate and dark shoulders of rock appeared in the water giving the illusion of swimmers, reaching from bank to bank, dispersing from themselves wreaths of snakes with imperceptible strokes. But slowly it grew clear with the brightening light that the swimmers were actually stationary and the chained commotion of the stream was their deceptive gesture . . . (p.11)

We learn that after the 'crash' of the family business Stevenson began to lose his self-assurance, and as his terror at being thought guilty of fraud mingles with his terror at being alone in the jungle, he starts on the introspective adventure that turns his watch over the jungle into self-examination and self-judgement.

Kaiser appears as Stevenson's first confrontation with the unfamiliar, the haunting, fantastical nature of the jungle. His ancient wisdom questions Stevenson's values and perspectives and in many ways he resembles the ghost-like figure of Melquiades in Cien años de soledad. Stevenson describes him as:

. . . the strangest, most haunting or haunted creation of all things and beings he visualised. It was not merely the blackness of Kaiser's skin, within whose flesh appeared incandescent eyes lit as from the density of coal. It was the ghostly ash of the garments he wore; a breath of wind would surely have dispersed them, the most attenuated vest and shorts Stevenson had ever seen, plucked in the nick of time, he was inclined to swear, from some ancient fire. (pp.14-15)

The final image is an example of the extraordinary skill with which Harris suddenly evokes the mythical and visionary dimension within straightforward, realistic narrative. This dimension becomes increasingly more apparent as the novel progresses. It is the dimension which da Silva embodies who, again like Melquiades, "sought to express in an hour months of brooding silence, and in a single unbridled day centuries of an instinct for humility and wisdom." (p.42) Significantly, Stevenson's three encounters in the



jungle are with characters who either died or vanished in Harris' first two novels: Kaiser, da Silva, and the Amerindian woman, Petra. Their appearance illustrates Harris' conception of death as a passage into 'ever-living present.' As in work by García Márquez, physical death in Harris' fiction does not necessarily entail the death of the spirit but rather offers it the opportunity to develop toward a maturity it was incapable of in life.

Before da Silva is allowed to die the past, through the consciousness of Stevenson, must be re-enacted and its crimes redeemed. With the collapsing of his 'sealed horizons' precipitated by his presence in the jungle, Stevenson fully enters into the past:

. . . for the first time he began to appreciate the ordeal and misery and shock of his father's life, the great unnatural sacrifice involved in the preservation of the last shreds of dignity. His father's death, in this moment of nervous and blinding illumination, became his, and the endeavour to fulfil and save a certain presence, a certain priceless achievement in the past, became his also. (pp.25-26)

He not only recovers his own past, essential to Harris' process of psychic reconstruction, but exorcises the pain that was locked within the events of that past:

In some strange way he had never accepted his father's death until that death was in process of becoming *his*, just as he had never accepted Maria's flight as genuine until he, too, began to lose and betray himself. *The death of his body and the flight of his soul were now becoming real . . .* (p.27)

That Stevenson should be able to experience and re-sense his mistress' flight and his father's death shows these two individuals to be part of the 'community of being' each man carries within and belongs to outside himself; the same 'community of being' or collective consciousness which is so central to Cien años de soledad.

European colonizer, African colonized, pre-Columbian spiritual ancestors, are all part of this consciousness saturated with

conquest and division and a failure to fully integrate. Of the pre-Columbian tribes Harris says:

They had apparently failed in their mission to catch the unreality of themselves which they encountered in the rude nomadic tribes they came to rescue and civilize, who flitted like ghosts under a more compulsive baton, born of the spirit of place, than any a human conqueror could devise. (p.30)

Even as far back as this, then, man is seen as a fragment, divided from his own self, and life becomes the search for this lost wholeness. As Harris goes on to say:

Legendary hunted creatures they all were and their legend was an extraordinary malaise, the imitative dance of beast or fish or fowl, the inspired flight of the shaman seeking god, the incredible convoluted gyration of secret bodies with fins or feathers on their heads, ending or beginning again with the proliferate dance and vegetative process of life. Their religion was an extreme capacity for avenues of flight they made for themselves to discover a heartland which had been created for them and which they had lost. (pp.30-31)

Harris' novel is similarly a series of 'avenues of flight' in an attempt to discover that same heartland. It progresses in three stages: 'The Watchers,' 'The Watched,' and 'Creation of the Watch' which parallels the journey into the essence, into the origin of man, of Carpentier's 'Viaje a la semilla' or Los pasos perdidos. The final paragraph of 'The Watchers' shows Stevenson clinging to the structures of familiar reality after having drifted into the unknown. But it is a dangerously uncertain reality:

Time had been retrieved but the agonizing tenses of earth and water - the solid present and the fluid past - left him still gasping, uncertain of every living exercise, unsure whether the act of breathing was not an instinctual form of breathlessness as well. (p.33)

And as such familiar, previously inevitable reality is eroded, Stevenson, in a moment of awareness akin to Carpentier's poetic epiphany, begins to perceive the fantastic, magical features of reality:

The animalcule gaze of the bird crossed the web the spider had spun, as though the frailest refraction of vision occurred, swift as a glistening bead of water on dispersing and immaterial fabric. It was a fleeting coincidence established out of

spiralling visionary moments; in the spider's terrestrial universe the sky was precariously revolving around the earth, a sky whose silken broken texture one could conceivably have built; in the swallow's flying instinct the earth was leaning upwards condensed out of every shattered cobweb which held a running stream together like an instinctual ball one could never - in one's wildest imagination - have invented or made . . . (pp.46-47)

This new perception forces Stevenson "to venture into an interior where one saw oneself turned inside out" (p.48) and here it is that he truly recovers his own past, in the sense of the centuries of civilization that he carries inside, as he gains "a larger symbolic awareness of himself transcending the crippled sleep of existence - reminding him of how the dead may recall the royal substance of the living and an amputated trunk still dream of suffering uncommon pangs with every exertion of a phantom limb." (p.50)

As Stevenson recovers this affinity across time and place and da Silva is allowed to die, the heartland depot can be opened to enable Petra to give birth to the child conceived long ago. It is particularly in keeping with Harris' belief in the necessary interaction of cultures and peoples that Stevenson, a modern Guyanese, should help bring to life the offspring born of the meeting between conqueror (Donne) and conquered (Petra).

Petra is an interesting contrast to Carpentier's stereotyping of the Amerindian in Rosario. Like all Harris' women she functions partly as the symbol of wholeness and perfection; the lost, elusive ideal of union and healing of the universal wound. Harris invests her with a powerful presence:

A woman had come abruptly out of the bush, Amerindian, midnight hair on her shoulders, so jet-black it looked as if her headdress was one perpetual plait and stroke of mourning. Her eyes were sad, blacker than numerals of ink and yet devoid of the sinister humour of self-pity . . .

She possessed . . . the propriety and impropriety of the muse of the jungle - the heart as well as the heartlessness of the new world - (p.62)

As well as female strength and wholeness, Petra is also a link with

the Amerindian past and contains the instincts and knowledge of that race:

And yet nothing within her or without succeeded in eclipsing entirely the old tribal mystery and knowledge that she was being followed and watched. (p.68)

But she is not the tool that Rosario becomes and her primitiveness is not equated with simplicity. On the contrary, Petra remains something strange and elusive, something 'other' which Stevenson never quite fully grasps. The "point of recognition and contact" (p.79) which is struck between them, however, is important:

The woman was oblivious to his presence, swallowed up and swallowing him up, he felt, in an enormous kind of intimate struggle and symbolic sleep in which they were fatefully and psychologically involved, as only strangers can be when they become equally strange in relation to themselves and to every cherished misconception they held. (p.79)

Central to the work of Harris and García Márquez is the notion that through love can come transcendence of the earthly state, and that lovers are, ideally, gateways to each other, leading away from the fleshly obsession of the now, into the freedom of immortality. Stevenson does not attain this ultimate integration and transcendence, and perhaps it is for this reason that Heartland ends within the process of that same quest - an authentic sensibility recovered, but the future still to be fashioned:

And so the longest crumbling black road Stevenson followed . . . moving still towards fashioning a genuine medium of conquest, capable of linking and penetrating the self-created prison-houses of subsistence, these being the confusing measure of vicarious hollow and original substance.

Stevenson did not know where the road led. He only knew it was there. (p.90)

(b) Gabriel García Márquez

(1) Transitional Frameworks

As a journalist on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, and later as a Latin American superstar, García Márquez has enjoyed an intimacy with his readership barely possible for the writer publishing in the U.S.A. and in Europe. It is this interaction which has been fruitful for him and he has, on the whole, avoided entering into literary critical debate and theoretical discussion, expressing, indeed, severe distrust of such academic scholarship.<sup>30</sup>

His early journalism, collected in the two volumes of Textos costños,<sup>31</sup> is written as social commentary rather than criticism and in the often blurred line between commentary and fiction can be found many of the themes and techniques characteristic of the later works. It is also here, and especially when part of the Grupo de Barranquilla, that García Márquez discusses literary interests and influences and his hopes for the future direction of Latin American literature. In his article 'El Grupo de Barranquilla'<sup>32</sup> Jacques Gilard presents the group - García Márquez, Germán Vargas, Alfonso Fuenmayor and Alvaro Cepeda Samudio - as striving to be cross-cultural in perspective. On the one hand there is a championing of the Caribbean coast in the face of the narrow provincialism of the centre, the following comment by García Márquez being typical:

Hace algunos días . . . un inteligente amigo me advertía que mi posición con respecto a algunas congregaciones literarias de Bogotá era típicamente provinciana. Sin embargo, mi reconocida y muy provinciana modestia me alcanza, creo, hasta para afirmar

que en este aspecto los verdaderamente universales son quienes piensan de acuerdo con este periodista sobre el exclusivismo parroquial de los portaestandartes capitalinos. El provincianismo literario en Colombia empieza a dos mil quinientos metros sobre el nivel del mar.<sup>33</sup>

On the other, there is an embracing of foreign (especially North American) as well as local, Caribbean influences. Many critics<sup>34</sup> have pointed to the fact that between the earlier generation of Latin American writers and the new generation of today's novelists stands a generation of North American writers whose works were widely read and translated in the decades following the First World War, and in the journalism of the Grupo de Barranquilla we find constant reference to such writers as John Dos Passos, Erskine Caldwell, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck and William Faulkner. The experiments and innovations of the wider Modernist movement were also seen as central to the future development of literature and in response to one critic's lamenting of this influence on the Colombian novel, García Márquez writes:

Todavía no se ha escrito en Colombia la novela que esté indudable y afortunadamente influida por los Joyce, por Faulkner o por Virginia Woolf. Y he dicho "afortunadamente," porque no creo que podríamos los colombianos ser, por el momento, una excepción al juego de las influencias. En su prólogo a "Orlando," Virginia confiesa sus influencias. Faulkner mismo no podría negar la que ha ejercido sobre él, el mismo Joyce. Algo hay - sobre todo en el manejo del tiempo - entre Huxley y otra vez Virginia Woolf. Franz Kafka y Proust andan sueltos por la literatura del mundo moderno. Si los colombianos hemos de decidirnos acertadamente, tendríamos que caer irremediabilmente en esta corriente.<sup>35</sup>

Like Harris, García Márquez sees in such works models of formal innovation that subvert the narrow bounds of realism and which can be applied to a specifically Caribbean reality. As the article above outlines, such 'influence' is a positive and invigorating cross-cultural trend that need not detract from an identity with place. Many of the pieces in Textos costefios reveal García Márquez consciously experimenting with the techniques of acknowledged stylists. In the 'Caricatura de Kafka,'<sup>36</sup> for instance, the

characters are identified by letters rather than names; the protagonist has just completed a trip throughout the night; the environs are of cold steel and ugly modernity; the protagonist's effort in crossing a bridge is thwarted by an official who is a part of a vast hierarchy; the protagonist suffers from initial indecision and ultimate failure. But beyond such experiments in method, it was with Faulkner that García Márquez felt a particular affinity of place. As he later discussed in conversation with Mario Vargas Llosa:

Es decir, nosotros estábamos viendo esta realidad y queríamos contarla y sabíamos que el método de los europeos no servía, ni el método tradicional español; y de pronto encontrábamos el método faulkneriano adecuadísimo para contar esta realidad. En el fondo no es raro esto porque no se me olvida que el Condado Yoknapathawpa [sic] tiene riberas en el Mar Caribe; así que de alguna manera Faulkner es un escritor del Caribe, de alguna manera es un escritor latinoamericano.<sup>37</sup>

García Márquez found many similarities between Faulkner's American South and the Caribbean coast of Colombia and it is the 'mood' of Faulkner's sense of place which he translated more than anything else into his early fiction. Although the plot pattern and style of La hojarasca closely resemble that of As I Lay Dying, it cannot be read, as some critics have implied,<sup>38</sup> simply as an unequal imitation. García Márquez is not an experimentalist in the same way as Faulkner and he is not interested in being formally 'difficult' in the way Joyce, Eliot and Faulkner were. To read La hojarasca only in relation to Faulkner is to miss the specificity of Macondo which García Márquez, through the help of Yoknapatawpha, is beginning to shape. As Oberhelman writes:

There is a pervasive feeling of solitude that dominates all of the action of La hojarasca, and the title itself suggests the idea of decadence and decay. This mood is frequently present in Faulkner as he describes the disintegration of the South which later generations attempt to expiate. Both Yoknapatawpha County and Macondo bear the scars of prior civil strife, and both contain enigmas that are insoluble.<sup>39</sup>

Macondo shares many of the historical and geographical contexts of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, but it is not a mirror image. With the publication of Cien años de soledad, most critics<sup>40</sup> agree that the influence of Faulkner is replaced by Carpentier (and that of Kafka by Borges), so that the imagination of García Márquez "domesticates itself within its own language,"<sup>41</sup> and, indeed, Cien años is a conscious celebration of the new generation of Latin American writers. But even the earliest 'Macondo' pieces collected in Textos costefios reveal an affinity with place, and with the myths and legends of that place, that sharply distinguish it from Yoknapatawpha County.<sup>42</sup> Despite the defining of literary 'influences' becoming, in this case, a growth industry, it is to the early journalism that we must return for insight into the perspectives and techniques that were to become García Márquez' writing of 'lo real maravilloso.'

Between 1948 and 1952, first in Cartagena and then in Barranquilla, García Márquez immersed himself in the folklore of the Caribbean coast. With Manuel Zapata Olivella as his frequent guide, he made several trips to Coastal regions to which he referred in his journalism.<sup>43</sup> As Jacques Gilard points out in his prologue to Textos, this experience was crucial to the way in which García Márquez developed:

Es cierto que la exaltación de la costefidad permitía, con notable facilidad, ver que la región es más que una región. No se trataba solamente de oponer valores locales al resto del país: la Costa pertenece a un amplio conjunto que excluye la mayor parte de Colombia y abarca regiones de otros países y hasta países enteros, el Caribe, Afro-Latinoamérica. Ese regionalismo costefio y anticachaco podía, de buenas a primeras, tener el sentido de la universalidad.<sup>44</sup>

In the culture of the costefios García Márquez embraced not only a radical counter-discourse to the narrow attitudes of the centre (Bogotá), but a cross-cultural link throughout the Americas and beyond. In an article entitled 'Algo que se parece a un milagro'



published in March, 1952, García Márquez relates a trip into the small town of La Paz which is noted for its folkloric songs, but where he finds there has been no music since the violence of a month before. He avoids censorship by alluding to the havoc of La Violencia only indirectly, but in his description of the song that breaks the silence and spreads through the town García Márquez invests a historical energy with the power to challenge the bloodshed of civil strife.<sup>45</sup> It is this energy which vitalizes much of the pre-Macondo fictional pieces, most notably the 'La Sierpe' series, in which the ageless matriarch, La Marquesita, rules over a land of enchantment and witchcraft, abounding in legends about the past and the fantastic in the present.<sup>46</sup> Read in the context of the rest of his journalism, this interest in myths and legends relates not to the 'exotic' but to a sustained preoccupation with the irrational, the unconscious, and the strangely compelling reality of dreams.

Loosely classified as 'social commentary,' the majority of García Márquez' newspaper stories originated from the international wire service, though his choice of material and fictional elaboration show the artist clearly at work. A story such as 'Los funerales de Jim Gersnhart,'<sup>47</sup> which tells of an American who organised his own funeral procession, inspires in García Márquez a meditation on the phenomenon of 'muertos vivos' - overlapping states between life and death - which is then translated into a story such as 'Elegia' where the dying is described in a peculiar way and death never seems to signify the literal end of life:

Aquello era tan inusitado y repentino, que Oliverio no había acabado de darse cuenta de lo que le había ocurrido, cuando lo metieron en el ataúd, tres o cuatro horas después.<sup>48</sup>

Connected to these overlapping states of consciousness are the regular stories about dreams and nightmares. In one fictional

anecdote entitled 'Pesadillas'<sup>49</sup> a man enters a newspaper office and brings his nightmares to the director, attempting to convince him of the value of publishing his dreams in the newspaper. It is a particularly notable, and slightly metafictional, story in relation to García Márquez' attempts to create an 'other reality' in the stories collected in Dios de perro azul. Another anecdote entitled 'Un profesional de la pesadilla'<sup>50</sup> deals with a character who is a nightmare specialist. This man spends twenty years concentrating on having the best nightmares possible, purposely inducing indigestion and nervousness in order to produce the strangest and most complex. The story describes his numerous techniques and the exotic nightmares they produce.

Although many of the pieces are light and humorous they recreate and validate a reality which García Márquez felt was being eroded by a progressively scientific view of the world. He laments the consequent lack of poetic vision more explicitly in an article of October, 1950:

La tierra, en la antigüedad, fue la más poética y complicada composición arquitectónica, consistente en un platillo gigantesco, sostenido por cuatro tortugas que navegaban en un mar de leche. Eso, hasta cuando alguien dijo: "¡La tierra es redonda!"<sup>51</sup>

In an article entitled 'La droga de doble filo'<sup>52</sup> García Márquez greets with horror the news that in the United States a drug against insanity has been invented. He proposes that this drug, if successful, will be detrimental: the Einsteins, the Huxleys, and the Faulkners of the world will cease to exist in this new world of absolute sanity. For as well as questioning the usefulness of man's rational capabilities, García Márquez actively defends the realms of 'insanity.' He writes, for instance, of 'El derecho a volverse loco' in an article published immediately before the carnival season in January 1950.<sup>53</sup> After a full year of the fastidious necessity of

sanity, according to the author, everyone is deserving of the right to go crazy.

Though critical of the effects of modern science and technology, and keen to recreate the logic of dreams and of the unconscious mind, the early journalism also indicates that García Márquez was fascinated with detective novels and with their exploration of logic and the rational processes. His 'Cuentecillo policiaco'<sup>54</sup> is a sophisticated parody of the genre and in its construction and attention to detail lie many of the familiar techniques of the later fiction. For it is often through the rational that García Márquez suggests the irrational, and his discussion of the relationship between the 'enigma' and the 'logic' in 'Misterios de la novela policiaca'<sup>55</sup> suggests the struggle between the two which he came to perceive as a necessary and complex dialectic. We see this dialectic emerging in the stories collected in Ojos de perro azul and it is here that we can locate García Márquez' journeys of transition into the "shadowy paradoxical" that connect him to a writer like Wilson Harris.

(ii) States of Transition/ States of consciousness

The stories written between 1947 and 1952 and originally published in newspapers in Bogotá and Barranquilla were later collected as Ojos de perro azul.<sup>56</sup> Each of them can be described as experiments in 'solitude' - in transitory and overlapping states between life and death, between the real and the metaphoric - and each are invaluable guides into the themes and style of García Márquez' later work. Fascination with the unconscious, the irrational and the mythical, as revealed in the early journalism, comes to particular fruition in the title story which is a powerful and haunting vision of the nature of the fragmented psyche.

'La tercera resignación,' García Márquez' first published short story, is a slightly macabre, Kafkaesque, meditation on "una muerte viva"<sup>57</sup> which points to similarities between the apparently fantastic and scientific logic. From the outset, the story seems to exist on both a real and a metaphoric level:

Había sentido ese ruido "las otras veces," con la misma insistencia. Lo había sentido, por ejemplo, el día en que murió por primera vez. Cuando - ante la vista de un cadáver - se dio cuenta de que era su propio cadáver. Lo miró y se palpó. Se sintió intangible, inespacial, inexistente. (p.7)

The apparently fantastical narrative proceeds as if logically and methodically, occasionally collapsing into humour at its own absurdity:

Hacia tiempo que el médico había dicho a su madre, secamente: -Señora, su niño tiene una enfermedad grave: está muerto. (p.7)

But despite all the incongruous details of the absurd, there is a perfectly rational and scientific explanation for everything that has happened. As the doctor confirms:

. . . haremos todo lo posible por conservarle la vida más allá de su muerte. Lograremos que continúen sus funciones orgánicas por un complejo sistema de autonutrición. (pp.7-8)

Having foregrounded the possible overlap between the fantastic and scientific logic at this point, the narrative then proceeds to problematize all readings so far by questioning the reliability of the narrative witness:

Cuando se sumergía en el delirio. Cuando leía la historia de los faraones embalsamados. Al subir la fiebre, él mismo se sentía protagonista de ella. Allí había empezado una especie de vacío en su vida. Desde entonces no podía distinguir, recordar cuáles acontecimientos eran parte de su delirio y cuáles de su vida real. Por tanto, ahora dudaba. Tal vez el médico nunca habló de esa extraña "muerte viva." Es ilógica, paradójal, sencillamente contradictoria. (p.8)

The scientific logic is as paradoxical as the fantastic so that the protagonist, bereft of any secure framework, is unable to decide whether he is alive or dead. The ending is typically comic and light, but with a slightly macabre undertone, as the protagonist 'resigns' himself to death:

Tal vez entonces esté vivo.  
Pero estará ya tan resignado a morir, que acaso muera de resignación. (p.16)

The influence of Kafka is also present in 'Diálogo del espejo' which highlights not so much the overlap as the dialectical struggle between science and the imagination. As the opening paragraph reveals, in exploring the 'other' García Márquez does not deny the life of the tangible:

Pero el sol regocijado que clarificaba el jardín le desvió la atención hacia otra vida más ordinaria, más terrenal y acaso menos verdadera que su tremenda existencia interior. Hacía su vida de hombre corriente, de animal cotidiano . . . <sup>52</sup>

As the story proceeds, the protagonist needs a sense of both the tangible and the intangible as he tries to explain how the image in the mirror has cut itself while he himself has not:

Creyó observar que una nube de desconcierto velaba el gesto apresurado de su imagen. ¿Sería posible que, debido a la gran rapidez con que se estaba rasurando - y el matemático se adueñó por entero de la situación - la velocidad de la luz no alcance a

cubrir la distancia para registrar todos los movimientos? ¿Podría él, en su premura, adelantarse a la imagen del espejo y terminar la tarea un movimiento antes de ella? ¿O sería posible - y el artista, tras una breve lucha, logró desalojar al matemático - que la imagen hubiera tomado vida propia y resuelto - por vivir en un tiempo descomplicado - terminar con mayor lentitud que su sujeto externo? (p.56)

The struggle between the mathematician and the artist is not resolved but is presented as a necessary and complex dialectic that affirms, rather than explains, the existence of 'other' realities. This theme is developed in 'La otra costilla de la muerte' where the narrative voice is communicated from a labyrinth of dreams and nightmares so that the 'other' is, in this case, the rational world of human beings. At the centre of the narrative is a typically absurd image - the death of one twin brother is seemingly questioning the identity of the other:

Tuvo la certeza, la seguridad de que si en aquel momento se hubiera acercado a un cristal lo habría encontrado en blanco, aunque la física no tuviera una explicación exacta para aquel fenómeno.<sup>52</sup>

Also typical is the scientific and Faulknerian attention to smell in describing the death and decomposition of the body.<sup>60</sup> But in realising his continuing connectedness with his dead twin brother, the protagonist of this story begins to intuit his part in a larger collective consciousness that was to become central to García Márquez' later fiction:

. . . no de ese cuerpo exacto, anatómico, sometido a una perfecta definición geométrica, no de ese cuerpo físico que ahora sentía miedo, sino de otro cuerpo que venía más allá del suyo, que había estado con él hundido en la noche líquida del vientre materno y se remontaba con él por las ramas de una genealogía antigua; que estuvo con él en la sangre de sus cuatro pares de bisabuelos, y vino desde el atrás, desde el principio del mundo, sosteniendo con su peso, con su misteriosa presencia, todo el equilibrio universal. (p.24)

This exploration of states of consciousness, which are also states of transition, is most dramatically focussed in the story of 'Eva está dentro de su gato.' Perhaps the most complex and multivalent of all the early short stories, its central concerns

revolve around the patriarchal pressures exerted upon, as well as the innate and ancient strengths exuded by, a specifically female spirit. The central character is described as an extremely beautiful woman, the descendant of a long line of beautiful women who have been pained by their beauty and the circumscribed roles assigned to them by a patriarchal society:

Estaba cansada de ser el centro de todas las atenciones, de vivir asediada por los ojos largos de los hombres.<sup>61</sup>

The anguish this woman feels at night is compared to hot, tiny insects running through her arteries and she can see in the faces of her ancestors that same torturing anguish:

Eran esos insectos los mismos que pintaban ese gesto amargo, esa tristeza inconsolable en el rostro de sus antepasados. Ella los había visto mirar desde su apagada existencia, desde su retrato antiguo, víctima de esa misma angustia. Todavía recordaba el rostro inquietante de la bisabuela que, desde su lienzo envejecido, pedía un minuto de descanso, un segundo de paz a esos insectos que allá, en los canales de su sangre, seguían martirizándola, y embelleciéndola despiadadamente. (p.30)

It is easy to see in the detailed descriptions of the insects an image for the many patriarchal pressures that eat away at the life of these women. But each image in this story very deliberately works on multiple levels of connotation, so that it is equally plausible, for instance, and considering the biblical resonances throughout the story, to read the insects as an image of original sin. The treatment of time and perspective are such that the mythical and historical can be suggested simultaneously. The following sentences which appear in the first paragraph:

. . . había que abandonar la belleza en cualquier parte; a la vuelta de una esquina, en un rincón suburbano. O dejarla olvidada en el ropero de un restaurante de segunda clase como un viejo abrigo inservible. (p.29)

are typical of the strategies employed in the story. As in Blake, there is always the feeling that as one turns a corner, one enters another time and space, while the imagery is, at the same time, often very specific and concrete. The existence of "el niño"

further suggests multiple levels of time and space for he is, on the one hand, the dead boy who continues to call from the other world at night and, at the same time, the embodiment of every dead boy buried below an orange tree whose spirit enters the fruit of that tree.

The central female protagonist also suggests both historical and mythical identities and seems at multiple points of transition. She is determined to transcend the dualism of extreme beauty and extreme pain that has plagued her line and to renounce its eternal transmission. The story describes her as being on the point of dying, but it is not so much her death that is described as her gradual realisation that she has become a pure spirit:

Estaba confundida. Solo tenía la sensación de que alguien la había empujado al vacío desde lo alto de un precipicio. Se sentía convertida en un ser abstracto, imaginario. Se sentía convertida en una mujer incorpórea; algo como si de pronto hubiera ingresado en ese alto y desconocido mundo de los espíritus puros. (p.37)

She finally escapes her corporeal self, but this transformation carries with it its own sense of loss. She is intensely aware of that other physical universe but she cannot communicate with it and it remains unaware of her. She is overwhelmed by a desire to eat an orange but in her new-found solitude, which she describes as "una oscuridad absoluta, radical," she discovers the reality of a world where all dimensions have been eliminated:

. . . estaba en todas partes de la casa, en el patio, en el techo hasta en el propio naranjo de "el niño." Estaba en todo el mundo físico más allá. Y sin embargo no estaba en ninguna parte. De nuevo se intranquilizó. Había perdido el control sobre sí misma. (p.39)

In an attempt to regain some control, and to satisfy her craving to eat an orange, she decides to penetrate the only body that remains in the house - that of the cat. The resulting metamorphosis inspires all manner of question:

¿Quién primaría en esa síntesis de mujer y gato? ¿Primaría el instinto animal, primitivo, del cuerpo, o la voluntad pura de mujer? La respuesta fue clara, cristalina. Nada había que



temer. Se encarnaría en el gato y se comería su deseada naranja. Además sería un ser extraño, un gato con inteligencia de mujer bella. (p.41)

But as the beautiful woman/pure spirit goes in search of the cat we seem yet again to enter another time scale. The previous descriptions of the house are now seen to have been far in the past and the description of the cat as "soñando que despertará" (p.42) suggests that this is the point from which the story has been told - i.e. the beautiful woman, on the point of metamorphosing again, has been remembering all her previous states, and especially the time when she was about to enter into her cat. The closing lines:

Solo entonces comprendió ella que habían pasado ya tres mil años desde el día en que tuvo deseos de comerse la primera naranja. (p.42)

are typical of García Márquez' sudden reversal of perspective to end a story, but in this case the 'twist' serves to synthesize, rather than displace, previous readings. The biblical resonances throughout now begin to connect with the indication in the title that this woman is "Eva," so that the end of the story takes us back to the imagery of its beginning and the parallels with the fall from Eden, when the first woman had that first desire to eat from forbidden fruit. Other recurrent themes, such as the nature of beauty and the processes of control, reinforce the view that though in parts as comic, as macabre and as absurd as any of García Márquez' early stories, 'Eva está dentro de su gato' also succeeds in weaving a complex thread through multiple layers of consciousness to suggest the story, on a mythical level, of archetypal woman.

'Amargura para tres sonámbulos' is one of the shortest of the early stories and exists almost wholly in that space of the "shadowy paradoxical" suggested in Eva's moments of transition. The opening sentences are themselves clues to García Márquez' own point of

transition, between close reflection, and sharp disruption, of a typically Faulknerian style:

Ahora la teníamos allí, abandonada en un rincón de la casa. Alguien nos dijo, antes que trajéramos sus cosas - su ropa olorosa a madera reciente, sus zapatos sin peso para el barro - que no podía acostumbrarse a aquella vida lenta, sin sabores dulces, sin otro atractivo que esa dura soledad de cal y canto, siempre apretada a sus espaldas. Alguien nos dijo - y había pasado mucho tiempo antes que lo recordáramos - que ella también había tenido una infancia.<sup>62</sup>

The use of pronouns rather than names, the mixed tenses and shifts in time, the repeated reference to the indistinct "alguien" and the use of smell to provide the only clear focus, are distinctly Faulknerian characteristics. But in the suggestion of greater time sweeps - "y había pasado mucho tiempo antes que lo recordáramos" - and especially in the nature of the delayed statement - "que ella también había tenido una infancia" - there is a sense of the absurd and the fantastic which moves beyond a Faulknerian framework. The treatment of time is consistently exaggerated - "Eramos adultos desde antes, desde mucho tiempo atrás" (p.44) - to suggest a dimension beyond time and history, and the boundaries between life and death, and between the identities of the "tres sonámbulos," are sufficiently indistinct to suggest a collective, rather than an individual, consciousness. Apart from a clearly focussed sense of the female within a patriarchal society:

Habría sido la señora respetable de la casa si hubiera sido la esposa de un buen burgués o concubina de un hombre puntual.  
(p.45)

there is little that pivots this story and there is no discernible plot line. The story progresses, instead, through a series of loosely connected and fragmentary observations concerning a central female figure, which, in describing her attempts to cling to something tangible, seem to suggest the illusion of all certainties.

. . . supimos después que había perdido la noción del tiempo cuando dijo que se había dormido sosteniendo por dentro la pared que el grillo estaba empujando desde afuera, y que estaba

completamente dormida cuando alguien, cogiéndola por los hombros, apartó la pared y la puso a ella de cara al sol. (p.46)

The woman is described as "moviéndose entre dos oscuridades" (p.46) and from her state of solitude, which is both isolating and privileged, she communicates an intuition of fragmenting boundaries:

Una vez nos dijo que había visto el grillo dentro de la luna del espejo, hundido, sumergido en la sólida transparencia y que había atravesado la superficie de cristal para alcanzarlo. (p.46)

But it is not until the title story that any real contact is made across these boundaries, although even here that contact is necessarily partial. Whereas the woman in 'Amargura para tres sonámbulos' is finally described as "disuelto en su soledad" (p.47) it is in the intermittently shared solitude of the man and woman in 'Ojos de perro azul' that transcendence of all dialectical oppositions is suggested. The story is written from the man's point of view, but again it is the woman who is vivid. From the opening lines it is clear that perspective will be used to interlink and transpose the positions of subject and object:

Entonces me miró. Yo creía que me miraba por primera vez. Pero luego, cuando dio la vuelta por detrás del velador y yo seguía sintiendo sobre el hombro, a mis espaldas, su resbaladiza y oleosa mirada, comprendí que era yo quien la miraba por primera vez.<sup>43</sup>

The man regularly meets the woman in a dream but cannot remember the words that will lead him to her the next day. The words themselves - "Ojos de perro azul" - are curiously reminiscent of the juxtaposition of woman and animal in 'Eva está dentro de su gato,' and like Eva, the woman of this story seems to be invested with an ancient spirit, so that she is, at once, both individual and collective. She seems more familiar with the dreamworld in which the meetings take place. When the man remarks, for instance, that he can smell the country, she replies:

'Conozco esto más que tú. Lo que pasa es que allá afuera está una mujer soñando con el campo.' (p.66)

The story takes place entirely within this dreamscape where all dimensions of time and space have collapsed. At the centre is the room where the man and woman meet, but just beyond the door are hallways of other dreams, their own as well as those of other people. Identity can be as interchangeable as time and space, so that at one point the man remarks:

'A veces, en otros sueños, he creído que no eres sino una estatuilla de bronce en el rincón de algún museo' (p.61)

and although they have been meeting for some time, the reality which allows them to do so is always fragile:

Nos veíamos desde hacía varios años. A veces, cuando ya estábamos juntos, alguien dejaba caer afuera una cucharita y despertábamos. Poco a poco habíamos ido comprendiendo que nuestra amistad estaba subordinada a las cosas, a los acontecimientos más simples. Nuestros encuentros terminaban siempre así, con el caer de una cucharita en la madrugada. (pp.64-65)

But despite the lack of all securities, certainties, and any clearly definable parameters, the point of contact is such that it transcends all physical dimensions and suggests a bond at the level of psyche. At one point the woman is sitting in front of a mirror and the man, with his back to her and facing a brick wall, can see her face as clearly as she can see his:

Y vi en la pared como si ella hubiera levantado los ojos y me hubiera visto de espaldas en el asiento, al fondo del espejo, con la cara vuelta hacia la pared. (p.60)

They meet only transitorily, but in that meeting there can be no obstacles to their communication. If, rather than as individuals, we see the man and woman as dual facets of one whole, then the above image is an extraordinary visualisation of that dialectical union of opposites upon which integration depends.

Having presented, on the one hand, such a powerful vision of psychical integration, the story continues to remind us of the

reality of division and fragmentation. Even as the man and woman meet and repeat the words "Ojos de perro azul" they both know that the man will not be able to remember them when he wakes up and so will not be able to find her. The woman, on the other hand, dedicates herself to finding him through that identifying phrase, repeating it to everyone she passes, writing it on the walls wherever she goes:

Y abrió la cartera y se arrodilló y escribió sobre el embaldosado, a grandes letras rojas, con la barrita de carmín para labios: "Ojos de perro azul." El vendedor regresó de donde estaba. Le dijo: "Señorita, usted ha manchado el embaldosado." Le entregó un trapo húmedo, diciendo: "Límpielo." Y ella dijo, todavía junto al velador, que pasó toda la tarde a gatas, lavando el embaldosado y diciendo: "Ojos de perro azul," hasta cuando la gente se congregó en la puerta y dijo que estaba loca. (p.63)

This picture of the woman in everyday is typical of the way in which García Márquez suggests the logic of the apparently insane. To the outside world her actions are seen to be crazy, and, indeed, the idea of this woman crouched on all fours, frantically scrawling the same words on the tiles, has a very contemporary feel and clear historical equivalent. The story, however, provides a context in which we cannot doubt the logic of her actions, nor admire her perseverance in attempting to rekindle the memory of another, even when, as the closing lines suggest, she may never escape this division in her dreaming/waking life:

"Te reconoceré cuando vea en la calle una mujer que escriba en las paredes: 'Ojos de perro azul.'" Y ella, con una sonrisa triste - que era ya una sonrisa de entrega a lo imposible, a lo inalcanzable, dijo: "Sin embargo no recordarás nada durante el día." Y volvió a poner las manos sobre el velador, con el semblante oscurecido por una niebla amarga: "Eres el único hombre que, al despertar, no recuerda nada de lo que ha soñado." (pp.66-67)

Like 'Eva está dentro de su gato,' the story is richly metaphorical and cannot be reduced to any single reading. In the meeting of the man and woman lies a momentary/transitory contact which implies a previous or possible wholeness, and as in Asturias'

Hombres de maiz the quest for integration can be equated with the quest for the lost female principle. Asturias' opening epigraph: "Aqui la mujer, yo el dormido" would equally serve as epigraph to this story in which the woman, placed in apposition to the sleeper, expresses the presence of the Eternal feminine which exists in man's unconscious, but which continues to be repressed in his conscious, waking life. The final sentence of the story is typical of García Márquez' dramatic endings in its implication that this is the "only" man who does not remember anything of his dreams. But like the woman, the man acts as collective archetype as well as individual, so that his separation can be seen as an image for man's collective dissociation from his/her own unconscious. The use of the direct address also forces the reader to consider the significance of his/her own (un)remembered dreams.

Other stories, such as 'Alguien desordena estas rosas,' reveal that García Márquez, like Harris, enjoys playing with the obvious tautology of time and space dimensions and is as interested in the comedy and humour of dialectical oppositions as in their serious investigation. It is important to remember this dual approach when comparing the work of Harris and García Márquez, for comedy is an important release in the explorations of both writers and laughter, as the conclusion remind us, has its own capacity to subvert.

NOTES

Chapter 4) DRAMAS OF TRANSITION

(a) Wilson Harris

(i) Transitionary Discourses

1. See, for instance, his 'Note on the Genesis of *The Guyana Quartet*' added to the 1985 publication of *The Guyana Quartet* (London: Faber and Faber), pp.7-14.

2. Wilson Harris: 'The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination' in *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 27, no.1 (1992), 13-25, (p.15).

3. In conversation with Harris on 28th January, 1993, he explained how his distrust of many critical approaches and theories had "driven" him to write his own. The following essays and talks have established a considerable reputation for him as a literary critic:

*Tradition, the Writer and Society* (London: New Beacon Press, 1967)

*Explorations* (Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1981)

*The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* (London: Greenwood Press, 1983)

*The Radical Imagination: Lectures and Talks*

by Wilson Harris. eds. Riach and Williams (Liège: L<sup>a</sup> - Liège Language and Literature, 1992).

4. Harris: *The Womb of Space*, p.15.

5. *ibid.* pp.15-26.

6. *ibid.* p.15.

7. Harris: 'The Frontier on which *Heart of Darkness* Stands' in *Explorations*, pp.134-141, (p.134).

8. See Achebe: 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*' in *Hopes and Impediments*, pp.1-13.

9. Harris in *Explorations*, p.135.

10. *ibid.*

11. See, for instance, Harris' reading of Hudson's *Green Mansions* in relation to Arawak and Macusi myth, referred to later in this chapter (p.135). In a reading of his own work, see the parallel made between an aspect of Homer's *Odyssey* and South American/Guyanese legend of Canaima in 'The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination,' pp.21-25.

12. Harris acknowledges the influence of both writers and has referred frequently to their work. See Joyce Sparer Adler's work on Melville and Harris, eg. 'Harris's Cross-Cultural Dialogue with Melville' in *Wilson Harris: The Uncompromising Imagination*, ed. Hena Maes-Jelinek (Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1991), pp.83-91.

13. Herman Melville: Benito Cereno in Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories (London: Penguin, 1985), pp.215-307, (p.226).

14. Harris: 'Literacy and the Imagination' in The Literate Imagination: Essays on the Novels of Wilson Harris, ed. Michael Gilkes (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp.13-30, (p.17).

15. Writers throughout the Americas have acknowledged Faulkner as an important literary ancestor and his translation into Spanish was crucial to the writers in Latin America who were to become the 'boom' generation.

16. Harris: The Womb of Space, p.15.

17. William Faulkner: The Sound and the Fury (London: Picador, 1989, [1931]) pp.146-147.

(11) Journeys of Transition/ Into the Unconscious

18. The Sound and the Fury, pp.146-147.

19. See eg. Hena Maes-Jelinek: 'The Myth of El Dorado in the Caribbean Novel' in Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 6, No.1 (1971), 113-128, (p.122).

20. For further discussion of this historical difference see the introduction in Reinventing the Americas, eds. Bell Gale Chevigny and Gari Laguardia (C.U.P., 1986), pp.3-33.

21. W.H.Hudson: Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest (London: Dent, 1951 [1904]), p.17.

22. In Rima's 'bird language' Hudson attempts to create a medium of communication that transcends the simplified expression of speech. See eg. Green Mansions, pp.245-7, where the limitations of Abel's 'words' are exposed.

23. *ibid.* pp.274-276.

24. Wilson Harris: 'Some Aspects of Myth and the Intuitive Imagination' in Explorations, pp.100-106, (pp.105-106).

25. Hudson: Green Mansions, pp.296-297.

26. Los pasos perdidos (Madrid: Catedra, 1985 [1953]), see eg. p.72.

27. *ibid.* p.101.

28. *ibid.* p.225 and p.232.

29. Quotation from Edwin Muir in Wilson Harris: Heartland (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p.6.



(b) Gabriel García Márquez

(i) Transitionary Frameworks

30. See eg. 'The Visual Arts, the Poetization of Space and Writing: An Interview with Gabriel García Márquez' by Raymond L. Williams in PMLA (March, 1989), 131-140, (pp.138-139).

31. Textos costeños. ed. Jacques Gilard, 2 vols (Bogotá: Editorial Oveja Negra, 1981).

32. Jacques Gilard: 'El Grupo de Barranquilla' in Revista Iberoamericana: Homenaje a Gabriel García Márquez, 50, no.126 (1984), 905-935.

33. García Márquez: 'Otra vez Arturo Laguado' in Textos costeños, I, pp.216-217 [quoted by Gilard in 'El Grupo de Barranquilla,' p.910].

34. See eg. Harley D. Oberhelman: 'Faulknerian Techniques in Gabriel García Márquez' Portrait of a Dictator' in Ibero-American Letters: A Comparative Perspective. eds. V.T. Zyla and W.M. Aycock (Lubbock: Technological University of Texas, 1978), pp.171-181, (p.172).

35. García Márquez: '¿Problemas de novela?' in Textos costeños, I, pp.212-213, (p.213).

36. García Márquez: 'Caricatura de Kafka' in Textos costeños, I, pp.331-332.

37. García Márquez and Vargas Llosa: La novela en América latina: Diálogo (Lima: Carlos Milla Batres/Ediciones Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería, 1968), p.52 [quoted by Oberhelman in 'Faulknerian Techniques in Gabriel García Márquez' Portrait of a Dictator,' p.173].

38. See eg. William Plummer: 'The Faulkner Relation' in Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez. ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1989), pp.33-47.

39. Harley D. Oberhelman: 'The Development of Faulkner's Influence in the Work of García Márquez' in Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez. pp.65-79, (p.68).

40. See Harold Bloom's introduction to Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez, pp.1-4, (p.1).

41. *ibid.* p.1.

42. See pieces listed as 'apuntes para una novela' in Textos costeños.

43. See Gilard's prologue to Textos costeños, pp.5-46, (p.37).

44. *ibid.* pp.36-37.

45. see García Márquez: 'Algo que se parece a un milagro' in Textos costeños, II, pp.569-571.

46. Four short stories called the 'La Sierpe' series appeared in El Espectador in 1954. See Oberhelman in Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez. p.67.

47. García Márquez: 'Los funerales de Jim Gersnhart' in Textos costefios, II, pp.535-536.

48. García Márquez: 'Elegia' in Textos costefios, II, pp.653-654, (p.653).

49. García Márquez: 'Pesadillas' in Textos costefios, I, pp.304-306.

50. García Márquez: 'Un profesional de la pesadilla' in Textos costefios, II, pp.368-369.

51. García Márquez: 'El beso: una reacción química' in Textos costefios, II, pp.376-377, (p.376).

52. García Márquez: 'La droga de doble filo' in Textos costefios, I, pp.233-234.

53. García Márquez: 'El derecho a volverse loco' in Textos costefios, I, pp.124-125.

54. García Márquez: 'Cuentecillo policiaco' in Textos costefios, I, pp.276-278.

55. García Márquez: 'Misterios de la novela policiaca' in Textos costefios, II, pp.671-672.

(11) States of Transition/ States of Consciousness

56. Stories written between 1947 and 1952 first published in:

'La tercera resignación' in El Espectador, Bogotá, 13 Sept, 1947

'Eva está dentro de su gato' in El Espectador, 25 Oct, 1947

'La otra costilla de la muerte' in El Espectador, 25 Jul, 1948

'Diálogo del espejo' in El Espectador, 23 Jan, 1949

'Amargura para tres sonámbulos' in El Espectador, 13 Nov, 1949

'Ojos de perro azul' in El Espectador, 18 Jun, 1950

'La mujer que llegaba a las seis' in Crónica, Barranquilla, 24 Jun, 1950

'La noche de los alcaravanes' in Crónica, 29 Jul, 1950

'Alguien desordena estas rosas' in Crónica, 2 Dec, 1950

'Nabo. El negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles' in El Espectador, 28 Mar, 1951

Collected in, Gabriel García Márquez: Ojos de perro azul (Bogotá: Editorial Oveja Negra, 1979).

57. García Márquez: 'La tercera resignación' in Ojos de perro azul, pp.5-16, (p.8).

58. García Márquez: 'Diálogo del espejo' in Ojos de perro azul, pp.49-57, (p.49).

59. García Márquez: 'La otra costilla de la muerte' in Ojos de perro azul, pp.17-27, (pp.25-26).

60. *ibid.* pp.22-23.

61. García Márquez: 'Eva está dentro de su gato' in Ojos de perro azul, pp.29-42, (p.29).

62. García Márquez: 'Amargura para tres sonámbulos' in Ojos de perro azul, pp.43-47, (p.43).

63. García Márquez: 'Ojos de perro azul' in Ojos de perro azul, pp.59-67, (p.59).

Chapter 5) SOLITUDE AND THE QUEST FOR INTEGRATION

Harris' Heartland and García Márquez' early stories can be read as an expression of breakdown, of fracture, and as the first tentative searches for progress and transcendence. The following chapters will trace the stages of this quest - the nature of solitude, of shared solitude, and of psychic wholeness, and the radicalizing of the conventions of novelistic form in articulating that quest. As I move through the themes of these chapters I will begin to focus on García Márquez' Cien años de soledad and Harris' trilogy Carnival, The Infinite Rehearsal, and The Four Banks of the River of Space. Much of García Márquez' work since Cien años de soledad has been concerned with the spiritual journey and I will make reference to other texts where I have found them particularly relevant. La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada will be explored in relation to myth and El amor en los tiempos del cólera in relation to the treatment of love. There is a much greater consistency, an obsessiveness even, in the ongoing themes and forms of Harris' fiction. As the author has said of his own novels:

Each apparent finality of performance was itself but a privileged rehearsal pointing to unsuspected facets and the re-emergence of forgotten perspectives in the cross-cultural and the universal imagination.'

If each novel is itself an 'infinite rehearsal' then the selection of texts upon which to focus is, to some extent, arbitrary. As Lévi-Strauss has said of the study of ancient myths,<sup>2</sup> Harris' novels have no beginning and no end, each revising and transforming the other. As with García Márquez, then, reference to other texts by Harris will be inevitable. The Amerindian tales The Sleepers of

Roraima and The Age of the Rainmakers, for instance, are central to Harris' exploration of myth and the cross-cultural imagination. By focusing on the later trilogy, however, I am hoping to foreground the ways in which Harris' work also diverges from that of García Márquez. This latter point is particularly important, for while this thesis aims to explore the many connections and overlapping contexts between the two writers, that is not to suggest a 'sameness' which might undermine their originality. Their differences are as important as their similarities.

This chapter will look at solitude as presented in the work of Harris and García Márquez and will use R.D. Laing's journey of the schizophrenic<sup>3</sup> to parallel some of the processes experienced by characters in the texts. These processes are mirrored in the narrative forms of both writers, though each deconstructs their fictions in quite specific ways. The chapter will also explore common themes in the quest for integration: mediating polarities such as scientific knowledge and intuitive wisdom, the rational and irrational; the search for the female principle, to which the male tradition must be reconciled.

As Heartland and Qios de perro azul have already indicated, the spiritual journey begins with the cultivation of solitude. This process of individuation, in Jung's terms, shares parallels with what R.D. Laing has called the "natural healing process"<sup>4</sup> undertaken by some of the people we label schizophrenic, and Laing's categories are helpful in focusing the process of renewal which emerges from fragmentation. With reference to a variety of case studies<sup>5</sup> Laing charts the journey of the schizophrenic as entailing:

- (i) a voyage from outer to inner,
- (ii) from life to a kind of death,
- (iii) from going forward to a going back,
- (iv) from temporal movement to temporal standstill
- (v) from mundane time to aeonic time,
- (vi) from the ego to the self

- (vii) from being outside (post-birth) back into the womb of all things (pre-birth),  
and then subsequently a return voyage from  
(1) inner to outer,  
(2) from death to life,  
(3) from the movement back to a movement once more forward,  
(4) from immortality back to mortality  
(5) from eternity back to time,  
(6) from self to a new ego,  
(7) from a cosmic foetalization to an existential rebirth.<sup>6</sup>

Instead of the *degradation* ceremonial of psychiatric examination, diagnosis and prognostication, Laing argues that we need an *initiation* ceremonial through which the person (who, in psychiatric terms, is about to go into a schizophrenic breakdown) will be guided with full social encouragement and sanction into inner space and time. This 'initiation ceremonial' is the starting point for many of Harris' dramas. The dream which opens Palace of the Peacock, Stevenson's delirium at the beginning of Heartland, are the events which 'initiate' the breakdowns of their respective protagonists. The experiences related are disturbing, but the poetic and visionary style of the prose create the feeling of a necessary journey:

The springs of turbulence which coiled around the rocks where the current seemed to spark and divide heralded the imminent break-up of the stream into several channels and islands. The race for the rapids was about to begin. Stevenson could hear the distant roar of the falls like a great electric crowd poised in space to witness an event.<sup>7</sup>

The sense of ritual connoted by the term 'initiation ceremonial' is appropriate here. Stage vii of Laing's journey of the schizophrenic directly parallels the myth and ritual of *yajé* as experienced by Amerindian tribes. As already outlined,<sup>8</sup> the effects of *yajé* (a particular type of narcotic drug) are interpreted as a return to the maternal womb, as a visit to the place of creation, the origin of everything that exists. This is an image that runs throughout the process of recovery in Harris' fiction and is explicitly declared by Fenwick in The Secret Ladder:

It isn't a question of fear - it's a question of going in unashamed to come out of the womb again.<sup>9</sup>

The journalism and early stories of García Márquez can also be read in relation to a Laingian approach to the schizophrenic experience. García Márquez declares himself suspicious of the psychiatric lines which divide sanity from insanity and in a story such as 'Ojos de perro azul' suggests an inner logic that compels the apparently schizophrenic actions of the woman crouched on all fours. Rather than an initiation ceremonial, however, García Márquez' characters tend to suffer the degradation and alienation meted out to them by society. Like the woman in 'Ojos de perro azul,' La hojarasca imagines a lonely and proud figure living out a life in defiance of the society around him. The solitariness of the retired and wasting doctor of this novel is interpreted by the town as something perverse and unnatural, when it is also an act of courage, a moral rebellion of sorts, the sense of which is heightened by the constant associating of the doctor with the admired and respected local priest.<sup>10</sup>

The sense of death in this novel is very strong, literally the smell of death, as in Faulkner's As I lay Dying. In the earlier stories, however, as well as in Cien años de soledad, there is a constant blurring between life and death and, as in Harris' fiction, an uncertainty in the description between physical and symbolic death. Looking again at 'La tercera resignación' and 'La otra costilla de la muerte' we could say that both characters are experiencing stage ii of Laing's journey of the schizophrenic. In the case study 'A Ten-Day Voyage,'<sup>11</sup> a patient mirrors the experiences of the characters in the above two stories when he relates how he felt that he had died, but was still observing the world lucidly. Laing comments:

He had not died physically, but his 'ego' had died. Along with this ego-loss, this death, came feelings of the enhanced significance and relevance of everything.

Loss of ego may be confused with physical death . . . <sup>12</sup>

The same patient later comments:

But I had this feeling all the time of . . . moving back - even backwards and forwards in time, that I was not just living in the present moment.<sup>13</sup>

This reflects the words of Omar Cabezas as he relates a crucial stage in his own spiritual journey in La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde<sup>14</sup> and is reminiscent of the process Harris describes as "a revelation of the partial ground on which we stand."<sup>15</sup> This is also the way in which Cien años de soledad is structured so that the reader, in the process of reading, experiences a kind of schizophrenic journey backwards and forwards in time.

When Laing's patient relates what he describes as 'a return voyage' it is in terms curiously reminiscent of an incident in Cien años de soledad:

And so I sat on the bed and I held my hands together, and as - I suppose in a clumsy way of linking myself up with my present self, I kept on saying my own name over and over again and all of a sudden, just like that - I suddenly realized that it was all over.<sup>16</sup>

When José Arcadio Segundo escapes the massacre of the workers by the Banana company, his re-emergence in Macondo is related in the following terms:

- Buenos - dijo exhausto. - Soy José Arcadio Segundo Buendía.  
Pronunció el nombre completo, letra por letra, para convencerse de que estaba vivo.<sup>17</sup>

This is a key moment in the novel and in the act of naming himself Jose Arcadio Segundo is reclaiming his position in reality. In his passage in the train of the dead we can detect elements of Laing's journey of the schizophrenic; in his long walk home the return voyage, so that the meeting with the woman signals stage 5 from eternity back to time.

At this point stages 6 and 7 of Laing's journey have still to be gained and these will be explored in the following chapters. Laing



himself imagined the completion of the spiritual journey in his creative piece The Bird of Paradise:

I have seen the Bird of Paradise, she has spread herself  
before me, and I shall never be the same again.  
There is nothing to be afraid of. Nothing.  
Exactly.  
The life I am trying to grasp is the me that is trying to  
grasp it.<sup>18</sup>

Or as Wilson Harris writes at the close of Palace of the Peacock:

Each of us now held at last in his arms what he had been for  
ever seeking and what he had eternally possessed.<sup>19</sup>

This breakdown or *journey* of the schizophrenic, which begins  
with the cultivation of solitude and becomes a healing process, is  
also enacted at the level of form. Borrowing a term from Michael  
Gilkes,<sup>20</sup> Harris has referred to this as the "creative  
schizophrenia" of the Caribbean and Guyanas:

I have long since felt that such "creative schizophrenia" is  
also a complex threshold into a cross-cultural medium that  
breaks the mould of a one-sided, conquistadorial realism.<sup>21</sup>

The breakdown of narrative form becomes, like the journey of the  
schizophrenic, a creative displacement through which radically new  
forms and structures are conceived. Harris' fictions are forthright  
in seeking to fracture the word, dissolve the image, shatter the  
persona in a web of contradictions. Like Faulkner, he dispenses  
with the full stop, the comma, or uses them in unconventional ways  
when fragmenting the stability of time, person and place and forcing  
the reader into the delirium of consciousness. Despite the  
fluidity, or discordancy, of grammar and syntax, however, Harris'  
language remains curiously robust, with sharply concrete images  
pivoting, if not always threading the narrative. The following  
lines open the second paragraph of The Secret Ladder:

Staccato voices rang out in explosions of menace from the  
bush in the neighbourhood of the stelling. Fenwick listened,  
wide awake now on the swooning river, wanting to shout an  
entreating command but unable to move his lips. The water on  
his forehead began to dry and to drip like large unnatural tears  
falling into a basin and exploding into mental punctures and

shot, muffled and inscrutable, yet clear and loud with the parody of self-abuse and violent reflection and fateful recrimination.<sup>22</sup>

Even in this short space we can see how the actuality of landscape and character dissolve into visionary image and philosophical idea while, at the same time, remaining quite physical and concrete. The detailed description is carefully signposted by sound and touch as well as sight. The action is linguistically as well as thematically repetitive ('rang out,' 'explosions,' 'exploding,' 'shot,') and reinforced through hard-edged alliteration ('to dry and to drip'). There is even a logic to the way the 'river' becomes 'the water on his forehead' and then the 'large unnatural tears' that end in 'violent reflection.' This is undercut, however, by the contradictory 'wide awake' and 'swooning,' 'entreating command,' 'muffled and inscrutable, yet clear and loud' and the deliberately indeterminate 'explosions of menace' and 'mental punctures.' It is this dialectical tension between the concrete image and the visionary idea which generates the dynamic of Harris' fiction. As Gregory Shaw writes:

The yoking together of contradictory or antithetical images results in a voiding of the word or concept that negates its given or conventional meaning. The word is "liberated," hollowed out, emptied, through a dialectical process of paired contradictions . . . Images crumble, shift, dissolve and coalesce in strange combinations, or, to use Harris' own term, "paradoxical juxtapositions" reflecting a universe in the process of becoming.<sup>23</sup>

The conflict between the philosopher and the muse, the notion and the image, generates a kind of passion, an explosive intensity, in which strangely potent images are conceived. After long philosophical musings in Carnival, for instance, we are suddenly confronted with the following intensely potent image:

The stranger waved his hand and appeared to disembowel space, yet to stitch it around the child in a wonderful garment with a button for an eye.<sup>24</sup>

The tension and dichotomy of such narrative strategies find momentary resolution and release in the 'metaphysical' image, the image strangely voided of content:

Faint crimson anxieties were suspended within yellow lampshades and refinements of purple.<sup>25</sup>

Such dramatic defamiliarization at the level of language is in sharp contrast to the way in which sentences are typically constructed in the fiction of García Márquez. In his essay 'From Realism to Magic Realism: The Meticulous Modernist Fictions of García Márquez'<sup>26</sup> Morton P. Levitt identifies a particularized use of tone as responsible for the deadpan way in which much of the marvellous reality in Cien años is relayed. He quotes García Márquez as saying:

I had an idea [after In Evil Hour] of what I always wanted to do, but there was something missing and I was not sure what it was until one day I discovered the right tone. It was based on the way my grandmother used to tell her stories. She told things that sounded supernatural and fantastic, but she told them with complete naturalness . . . I discovered that what I had to do [as a teller of tales] was believe in them myself and write them with the same expression with which my grandmother told them: with a brick face.<sup>27</sup>

Levitt argues that it is because of the unastonished tone of the narrative voice that we, as readers, are able to accept the events of the novel as real and not merely as fantasy. This relates back to Carpentier's essay 'De lo real maravilloso americano'<sup>28</sup> in that García Márquez is not a writer of fantastic literature, pointing out how fantastic his characters are, but a writer of magical realism (lo real maravilloso) where the supernatural exists in so far as people believe in it. Rather than fragmenting the conventions of realism at the level of language and making the word deliberately 'strange' as does Harris, García Márquez appropriates traditional realistic structures to validate the marvellous reality of Macondo and, by so doing, forces the reader to question the limits of his/her own reality.

Central to García Márquez' strategy of appropriation is the use of parody. At the same time as there is a certain demonstrable historicity to the events of Cien años de soledad, the mass of information in the form of dates, names, events, wars, governments, family lines etc. reads like a parody of the historical novel which serves to undermine both the totalizing nature of the genre, and the metanarrative of 'history' itself. The linear chronology of the historical novel is fragmented structurally, by sequences of loops and flashbacks and constant narrative interruptions, and also syntactically, by the use of multiple tenses in a single sentence. The novel's opening sentence is typical of the way in which a notion of time is displaced to suggest the interconnections between past, present and future:

Muchos años después, frente al pelotón de fusilamiento, el coronel Aureliano Buendía había de recordar aquella tarde remota en que su padre lo llevó a conocer el hielo. <sup>2\*</sup>

The word "después" immediately asks the question, 'later than what?' and the search for the present time is further problematized by the phrase "aquella tarde remota" which sets in the distant past an event which is about to be described. Despite the immediacy of "frente al pelotón de fusilamiento," the use of "había de recordar" again blurs the reader's perspective, reminding us of our dependency on the narrator's memory, and power of prophecy. The verbal form "había de" is used throughout the novel and is, in some ways, its most characteristic device. It looks both forward and backward, pointing to a place where the future of the story will have become (what it always was) the past of the narrator and the present of the reader.

A closer analysis of language and time, as aspects of narrative structure in the work of both Harris and García Márquez, will be undertaken later. At this point, I have wanted to illustrate some

of the ways in which the fracture of the schizophrenic journey is also enacted at the level of form. Although both writers display contrasting narrative strategies and stylistic techniques, both take the form of a deliberately self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement which becomes, like the schizophrenic journey, a creative displacement for the invention of radically new forms and structures. Though many of these structures are typically postmodernist<sup>30</sup> in character, it is necessary to stress the postcolonial genesis of these processes. As Helen Tiffin argues in her article 'Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History,'<sup>31</sup> there are obvious affinities in the experimental, metafictional techniques used by European and post-colonial writers, and Euro-American post-structuralist theories offer exciting possibilities to post-colonial theoreticians; nevertheless, there is a radical political difference that should not be assimilated by hegemonic use of the term 'postmodern':

Such erosion of fixed forms, a world of continual becoming can only signal a "crisis of authority" from a *European* perspective. From a post-colonial one it speaks of the erosion of that former authority and a liberation into a world in which one's own identity may be created or recuperated not as an alternative system or fixture, but as process, a state of continual becoming in which author/ity and domination of any kind is impossible to sustain.<sup>32</sup>

This is the process at work in the fictions of both Harris and García Márquez and what distinguishes them as post-colonial. Though they deconstruct their narratives in quite specific ways, they each share a magical realist faith<sup>33</sup> in the process of recovering or reconstructing reality, so that the breakdown of narrative form enables, rather than undermines, a possibility for change.

As previously mentioned, both writers also share common themes in articulating this possibility for change. Central to both is the search for intuitive capacity which is foregrounded in Cien años de

soledad and The Carnival Trilogy as a series of debates between scientific knowledge and intuitive wisdom, between the rational and irrational. Though these debates are explored through the pairing of oppositional categories, analysis of the texts reveals these patterns to be variously interchangeable, so that it is through the *disruption* of such oppositional patterns of thinking that both writers aim to generate an *intuitive* resource.

The need for scientific learning is stressed at the very start of Cien años in José Arcadio Buendía's initial fears that: "Aquí nos hemos de pudrir en vida sin recibir los beneficios de la ciencia." (p.70) But balanced against this is the privileged learning of Melquiádes who as an alchemist and a shaman is rooted in occultism and medieval learning. The novel also proceeds through the frequent recurrence of certain unexplained phenomena. Very early on, for instance, we learn of José Arcadio Buendía that:

Algo ocurrió entonces en su interior; algo misterioso y definitivo que lo desarraigó de su tiempo actual y lo llevó a la deriva por una región inexplorada de los recuerdos. (p.71)

Though never fully explained, these 'moments' are common and their cumulative power in the novel serves to disturb a too rigidly scientific outlook on life. Though also related as brief asides, these instances are often the inconspicuous catalysts of a momentous decision. The above example, for instance, is the moment in which José Arcadio is persuaded to settle in Macondo with his family.

The almost accidental way in which these events are told is linked to the playful tension created by José Arcadio's meticulously worked out plans and the often accidental/intuitive way in which they are realised. The discovery of the galleon, an indication of the proximity of the sea, tested his patience we are told:

Consideraba como una burla de su travieso destino haber buscado el mar sin encontrarlo, al precio de sacrificios y penalidades sin cuento, y haberlo encontrado entonces sin buscarlo, atravesado en su camino como un obstáculo insalvable. (p.69)

This process, whereby a sudden, accidental connection makes sense of a careful, logical investigation, would come as no surprise to a fan of detective fiction such as García Márquez and, as previous discussions have identified, this was a technique exploited in his own experiments with that genre. Intuition is always an element of the logic which unravels the dilemmas of detective fiction and in Cien años it is the character of Úrsula who is most consistently alert to such clues. Her sudden intuiting of the attack on Aureliano is a powerful episode in the novel and, though seemingly irrational, seems to validate the incredible spiritual bond which exists between this mother and son:

A esa hora, en Macondo, Úrsula destapó la olla de la leche en el fogón, extrañada de que se demorara tanto para hervir, y la encontró llena de gusanos.

- ¡Han matado a Aureliano! - exclamó.

Miró hacia el patio, obedeciendo a una costumbre de su soledad, y entonces vio a José Arcadio Buendía, empapado, triste de lluvia y mucho más viejo que cuando murió. "Lo han matado a traición - precisó Úrsula - y nadie le hizo la caridad de cerrarle los ojos." (p.225)

It is in extreme old age that Úrsula begins to depend on, and gain most from, her intuitive capacity:

. . . en la impenetrable soledad de la decrepitud dispuso de tal clarividencia para examinar hasta los más insignificantes acontecimientos de la familia, que por primera vez vio con claridad las verdades que sus ocupaciones de otro tiempo le habían impedido ver. (p.290)

Like the husband of María Tecún in Hombres de maíz, Úrsula acquires a greater clarity and lucidity in blindness, and only begins to make mistakes when "tratando de ver con los ojos las cosas que la intuición le permitía ver con mayor claridad." (p.292)

The need to correct our own vision, to cultivate intuitive, even spiritual, insight is stressed throughout the novel and most dynamically in the interplay between Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía. He plays the "masculine" to her "feminine" and his endeavours to subject every new discovery to a strict rational

criteria - such as stripping down the piano to discover its "magia secreta" (p.116) - become the source of much comedy for the reader. The intimacy with which these two characters combine, however, reminds us that it is the *interplay*, rather than the separation, of these categories which is dynamic. Colonel Aureliano and Remedios the Beauty are, in their different ways, lessons in the dangers of a single perspective. With the burning of his poems<sup>34</sup> Aureliano consciously denies an intuitive capacity and prepares for the brutalization of war, his consequent isolation most vivid in his refusing to allow anyone near him beyond a certain radius.<sup>35</sup> Remedios the Beauty is, alternatively, the embodiment of purity and innocence who, though seemingly retarded in conventional skills, possesses a gift of intuitive insight:

Parecía como si una lucidez penetrante le permitiera ver la realidad de las cosas más allá de cualquier formalismo. (p.243)

Unable to interact with the formal world, her presence causes havoc in that world until she finally levitates, as pure spirit, out of Macondo and into the clouds.

The other unconventional figure whose relationship with Macondo is similarly precarious is that of Melquiádes, the travelling gypsy who serves to cross-culturalize notions of scientific knowledge and intuitive wisdom. He is introduced as a mysterious and supernatural being who "parecía conocer el otro lado de las cosas." (p.63) But although he drifts in and out of Macondo in marvellous and unpredictable ways, his insights always remain rooted in the earth:

Pero a pesar de su inmensa sabiduría y de su ámbito misterioso, tenía un peso humano, una condición terrestre que lo mantenía enredado en los minúsculos problemas de la vida cotidiana. (p.63)

Indeed, as Floyd Merrell points out,<sup>36</sup> Melquiádes signifies a specifically Eastern knowledge which, though in direct contrast to José Arcadio's Western framework, is none the less scientific.



Melquíades introduces the astrolabe, the compass, the telescope and the magnifying glass to Macondo (all Arabic contributions to the Western world from the tenth to the twelfth centuries) and José Arcadio undergoes an intellectual transformation as a result of this contact in the same way as traditional European learning changed radically after the Arabs entered Spain.<sup>37</sup> Despite the positive influence Melquíades exerts on José Arcadio, however, there are distinct differences in the way each responds to scientific and technological invention. Merrell identifies this as a polarity between the utilitarian and non-utilitarian worldview:

Thus the gypsies, whose non-utilitarian, "animistic" conception of nature implies a ritual-oriented play element predominating over seriousness, represent the polar opposite to José Arcadio, who seeks practical ends through the methodical exploitation of a nature of which he considers himself no integral part.<sup>38</sup>

Merrell sees the increasing separation of Melquíades and José Arcadio as symbolic of the separation of East and West and shows how the transmutations in José Arcadio's conception of nature are analogous to the development of scientific thought in the Western world. The mechanization of man proceeds, for instance, when the birds in the cages are turned out and replaced by clocks and José Arcadio's increasingly materialistic vision is institutionalized in Macondo with the rise of capitalism. The plagues of insomnia and loss of memory disturb this progress, however. As Merrell comments:

Insomnia because Macondo, not unlike the eighteenth and nineteenth century Western World, having realized success with its postulated materialistic conception of nature, considers itself wide awake, or enlightened concerning the ultimate realities of the universe. Loss of memory because the people of Macondo forget that the mechanistic view they have adopted, was, in the beginning, only a hypostatized model rather than an invariable truth.<sup>39</sup>

It is significant that during the plagues Melquíades returns from the dead to introduce the daguerrotype, an optical instrument the Arabs contributed to the Western World, and predictable that José Arcadio would then endeavour to use this to prove scientifically the

existence (or inexistence) of God. José Arcadio's final crisis, his realization of the relativity of time and space,<sup>40</sup> parallels the fate of the classical mechanistic model of the universe at the beginning of the twentieth century. The significance of theories of quantum physics in the narrativizing of time and space will be looked at in more detail in Chapter 7. It is important to note here, however, that the breaking of the time machine (as José Arcadio describes it) coincides with the reappearance of the ghostly Prudencio Aguilar, to whom José Arcadio can now communicate beyond rational parameters, and with whom he journeys in mythical time.

The limitations of José Arcadio's scientific paradigms are exposed, then, through the intuitive (though not un-scientific) perspectives of both Úrsula and Melquíades. These perspectives do not, however, invalidate José Arcadio's struggle to comprehend reality, beneficial as it was to the modernization of Macondo. Nor can the characters of Úrsula and Melquíades be confined to the terms of this equation. Úrsula, for instance, also represents the oral tradition while Melquíades, as keeper of the Archive, has been described as a figure of Borges:

Old beyond age, enigmatic, blind, entirely devoted to fiction, Melquíades stands for Borges, the librarian and keeper of the Archive . . . Planted in the middle of the special abode of books and manuscripts, a reader of one of the oldest and most influential collections of stories in the history of literature, Melquíades and his Archive stand for literature; more specifically for Borges' kind of literature: ironic, critical, a demolisher of all delusions . . . <sup>41</sup>

Clearly, other equations need to be unravelled if we are to chart the process of solitude and the quest for integration. Debates between scientific knowledge and intuitive wisdom, between the rational and irrational, are also those between male and female, between East and West, between oral and written traditions and the search for intuitive capacity will be further explored as we approach these themes throughout the study.

The necessary interplay of the above characteristics is identified throughout Harris' fictions. In Tumatumari, for instance, Harris explicitly formulates the union of art and science, of the rational and irrational perspective:

Imagination. That girl has imagination. She reads everything I write and she'll know where the cap fits. I hope she won't marry someone like me. It would be a mistake. She needs an engineer. Cultural engineer - art and science. That's where the courage for the future lies . . . Not simply technological descent into matter (vulgar ruin). But a far-reaching assessment of the collision of cultures (nature and society) - the hidden *lapis*, the buried unity of man.<sup>42</sup>

In The Carnival Trilogy this belief in a dual perspective becomes, at times, almost a desperate plea:

Who am I? What is fragile humanity? What is poetry? What is science? Can they save creation in complex and ceaseless rehearsal of the birth of spirit?<sup>43</sup>

Harris is critical of the separation of the Humanities from Science and continually points to ancient figures who, like Melquíades, were able to combine scientific knowledge and intuitive wisdom:

You dead poet, dead magician, dead Quetzalcoatl, dead priests and scientists of ancient time, understand - surely you do - the predicament of the popular yet doomed player, popular yet doomed rebel, in an illiterate world.<sup>44</sup>

Harris argues that the imagination will only become 'literate' when it has bridged the gap between too easy and seductive polarities and learnt to re-apprehend the world "through fissures of capacity in which the scope and the potentials of buried traditions re-vision themselves."<sup>45</sup> Harris has termed this multi-perspective "quantum quetzalcoatl mathematics"<sup>46</sup> and it is with this in mind that he attempts to create a language of consciousness that debates, disrupts and transposes categories such as scientific knowledge and intuitive wisdom. It is with The Carnival Trilogy that Harris' interest in quantum physics, and its connections with mythical and intuitive thinking, is most clearly explored and, as with García Márquez, the specific implications of this approach will be

addressed in Chapter 7. At this point I would like to focus on Harris' treatment of landscape as an aspect of narrative which attempts to bridge oppositional categories of thinking in the search for intuitive capacity.

In a passage quoted earlier from Heartland I commented on the poetic and visionary style of the prose. Closer analysis of the first sentence:

The springs of turbulence which coiled around the rocks where the current seemed to spark and divide heralded the imminent break-up of the stream into several channels and islands (p.12)

reveals that it is also a very accurate description of the scientific and geological event that is about to take place. The scientific accuracy and empirical detail, the product of Harris' long study of rivers as a government surveyor, is often what hinges the description, at the same time as it suggests a number of metaphoric levels. Landscape is not, however, a passive vehicle for the author's mood and Harris is critical of writers<sup>47</sup> who assume this to be so. He stresses the dimensions and multi-dimensions of landscape, referring to the 'architecture' of the tides in the way that rocks in a waterfall, for instance, will shape and control the fall of the water.<sup>48</sup> Not only is landscape not passive, but (as Melquiádes served to remind José Arcadio) man cannot embark on its scientific study as a neutral observer. In his lecture 'The Fabric of the Imagination' Harris recalls the mismanagement of landscape on the Guyanan coastlands, until new methodologies were introduced after the Second World War. He goes on to say:

When we did that kind of new survey it was as if the whole field tilted and the boundaries were dislodged. We entered into a dialogue with the landscape. Instead of seeing the landscape as a passive thing to be manipulated, to have your formulae imposed upon it, we entered into a dialogue with it. The reservoirs, for example, which had been built, were really unscientific even though they seemed to conform to pure formulae, to Euclidean formulae. That kind of four-square world, that kind of Euclidean exactitude could no longer work if one were to enter into a profound dialogue with the

landscape. And that was another illustration of what I began to sense in the unpredictability of the rain forests, the inner momentum of rocks as they ascend and descend into a signature of tides, the architecture of rapids and waterfalls, the riddles of anatomy of space, subterranean rivers, wave and trough in high watersheds - all these were susceptible to a medium of intimate yet far-reaching mutuality.<sup>43</sup>

The apprehension of landscape is for Harris an example of the way in which a scientific discipline is linked to the creative imagination. In The Four Banks of the River of Space he reminds us that the ancient Macusis worshipped the architecture of tides and shows how their considerable science was also their route to spiritual and intuitive philosophy.<sup>44</sup> Harris attempts to bridge this gap (even in the passage above) through a language that combines concrete and empirical detail with highly complex poetic imagery. In The Four Banks the surveyor's perspective (as expressed above) is translated into the central image of the novel (the quantum stream possessed of four banks) through a description of landscape that connects the themes of the narrative to its own architectural cycle:

The tilted banks convert the river of space into a sieve that spills its contents. That sieve is the antiphon of the Waterfall, it constitutes a discourse between the rocks in the Waterfall and the clouds in the sky. The spilt water evaporates into cloud, evaporates into the promise of new rain, into cloudkinship to latencies of precipitation in and of the Waterfall through rock. And the voice of the spiralling flute mirrors within solid music the ascension of the spirits of the living and the dead through rock and cloud into space. (pp.44-45)

We can hear in Harris' language of consciousness the attempt to combine 'quantum quetzalcoatl mathematics' - i.e. the scientific knowledge and intuitive wisdom of the Amerindian, with the science of quantum physics and the intuition of the poet.

As with García Márquez, however, the search for intuitive capacity cannot be understood in Harris' fictions without reference also to the search for the female principle. We have already looked at the significance of female characterisation in Heartland and Ojos

de perro azul and, indeed, analysis of texts in Chapter 3 suggested the crucial role of the female archetype in magical realism's quest for integration. It is important, nevertheless, to reiterate the context in which the term 'female principle' is being used. Many female (and some male) writers have attempted to demythologise the image of the Woman as Muse, arguing that idealized and polarized (madonna/whore) images of women are part of an age-old male conspiracy to conscript the woman into ready-made roles and categories, denying her any individual identity or status. We have seen examples of the stereotypes that emerge from such generalized archetypes in Hudson's Green Mansions and Carpentier's Los pasos perdidos.<sup>51</sup> It is important, then, to stress the variety of female characterization that emerges in the work of both Harris and García Márquez. Eréndira, for instance, is a complex figure whose escape from confinement in La increíble y triste historia . . . has been analysed as a disruption of the traditional female archetype in Western patriarchal myth.<sup>52</sup> Angela Vicario is a similarly ambiguous and unpredictable character who can be described as both victim and accuser of the patriarchal world of Crónica de una muerte anunciada.<sup>53</sup> Even in Cien años, where there is so much stress on the creative power of women, García Márquez provides terse portrayals of the historical confinement of women by both church and society. As the heir to an impoverished catholic aristocracy, Fernanda is particularly helpless:

Al cabo de ocho años, habiendo aprendido a versificar en latín, a tocar el clavicordio, a conversar de cetrería con los caballeros y de apologética con los arzobispos, a dilucidar asuntos de estado con los gobernantes extranjeros y asuntos de Dios con el Papa, volvió a casa de sus padres a tejer palmas fúnebres. (p.251)

Women in Harris' fictions are similarly diverse and often occupy contradictory spaces. Mariella is both passive victim and the spirit of rebellion in Palace of the Peacock and it is through

Prudence's breakdown, following the deaths of husband and child in Tumatumari, that a new vision of possibility is intuited. Though always grounded in specific historical contexts, Harris' portrayals of women are not intended as realistic characters, but rather as complex symbolic figures that constantly negotiate the boundaries of conventional archetypes, what Harris describes as "the necessity to digest and liberate contrasting spaces."<sup>54</sup> In his essay 'The madonna/whore: womb of possibilities'<sup>55</sup> Mark McWatt argues that female characters in Harris' novels are in fact masks or manifestations of a single female presence<sup>56</sup> within which the opposing values associated with virgin and whore can cancel each other and leave desolation or void, or can suggest a womb or vessel of possibilities. In The Whole Armour, for instance, he demonstrates how Magda remains a parody of the madonna while Sharon acquires the fullest creative power of the archetype.<sup>57</sup>

This 'surfacing' of woman to provide the necessary balance and direction to a male oriented society is described by Michael Gilkes as a "tremendous energy resource"<sup>58</sup> now becoming available in Latin American and Caribbean writing. In his essay 'The Madonna Pool: Woman as "Muse of Identity"' he discusses writers as diverse as Brathwaite, Walcott and Bombal, while focussing on the particular significance of woman as muse in Harris' writing:

The variety of images of 'felicitous space' that recur in his work - cave, womb, shell, cradle, egg, room, boat, - are used as 'markers' which reverberate in the reader's mind as the 'inner space' journey proceeds. It is a journey towards anamnesis, the recovery or re-membering of broken history, broken community, an archetype of rebirth and redresses the balance of male/female relationships by a reuniting of Psyche and Eros.<sup>59</sup>

In The Infinite Rehearsal it is Emma who plays the role of muse and her task, we are told, is "to make the body of the resurrection beautiful to the woman in the man, the man in the woman." (p.75) The fact that Emma is a priest, later to become Archbishop in the

year 2025, indicates that this is no passive muse to a male creator but, on the contrary, a central creative force that suggests a future the male protagonist must learn, a theme reiterated in the closing lines:

A wave arose that bore me up. Bore the drowned boat up from the sea-bed. I was launched upon my voyage towards Emma. (p.82)

As Gilkes makes clear in his analysis, this journey forward is also a journey back and in The Four Banks of the River of Space the search for the female principle involves the recovery of the "nameless muse or chorus of the imagination" (p.136) that has been buried in traditional formula. The ancient Queens, Dido and Penelope, emerge from the margins of narrative to challenge historical biases; Penelope as feminine/intuitive wisdom, Dido as the muse of cross-cultural identity.

Dido appears first as the Dido Orchid, the appearance of which then reminds the narrator of the story of Aeneas and Dido, and the fate of the black African queen. Jupiter forbade Aeneas to wed Dido and settle in Africa:

All well and good to dally with her, to sleep with her, but it was implied that 'miscegenation' would come of such a union. (p.136)

Abandoned by Aeneas, Dido built her own funeral pyre. Her second death, however, is at the hands of chroniclers who distort her story:

And yet Virgil painted the African queen with white skin and flaxen hair. Such was the formula of epic evolution. (p.136)

Such was the formula that Europeanized Bolívar,<sup>60</sup> and just as the General is revisioned by García Márquez so, too, is Dido in Harris' novel. As the fire of memory rages, Dido appears in the path of the narrator as the hybrid muse that will lead him forward:

The blaze was high. The black African queen with white skin and flaxen hair split into two pictures. One was a constellation of Botanic lore transferred into the soil of the Americas. The other was a crucial moment in the womb of the human imagination



when the queen gives up the ghost of black or white purity and biased fossil, biased formula, on her funeral pyre in the heart of future generations. (p.137)

The figure of Penelope in The Four Banks is a complex one and will be discussed as an example of myth and the cross-cultural imagination in Chapter 6. She interacts with the narrator on a number of levels, as he himself states:

'I have pulled you back from the margins of nothingness but it's as if you too have pulled me, have drawn me, into *your* tapestry and canvas within (I am not sure), across (I am not sure) an abyss.' (p.56)

This is not the chaste and passive figure that has evolved with tradition. This Penelope has lost her husband in the war and embarked on a number of quests with her new lover. Her perspective is crucial to the novel as she disrupts the narrative, weaving unsuspected variations that connect her to another Penelope:

The truth is your husband may have returned from the Trojan war to vanquish your suitors. But you remained *central* to every canvas. You were Wisdom, feminine Wisdom. You pulled him there across the seas into the loom that you wove, unravelled, stitched . . . (p.56)

There is much the same sense of a revisioned Penelope in the description of Amaranta Úrsula as she returns to Macondo:

Amaranta Úrsula regresó con los primeros ángeles de diciembre, empujada por brisas de velero, llevando al esposo amarrado por el cuello con un cordel de seda. Apareció sin ningún anuncio, con un vestido color de marfil, un hilo de perlas que le daba casi a las rodillas, sortijas de esmeraldas y topacios, y el cabello redondo y liso rematado en las orejas con puntas de golondrinas. El hombre con quien se había casado seis meses antes era un flamenco maduro, esbelto, con aires de navegante. No tuvo sino que empujar la puerta de la sala para comprender que su ausencia había sido más prolongada y demoledora de lo que ella suponía.

- Dios mío - gritó, más alegre que alarmada - ¡cómo se ve que no hay una mujer en esta casa! (p.410)

Her husband has the look of a sailor, but it is she who is driven on a sailor's breeze, "llevando al esposo amarrado por el cuello con el cordel de seda." Like the Penelope of The Four Banks Amaranta Úrsula has pulled her husband across the seas and back to Macondo. In Cien años, however, it is she who has undertaken the epic quest

and her return home represents both the completion of that quest and the return of the female principle to a Macondo which had languished in its absence. For Amaranta Úrsula is both individual and archetype. Spontaneous, emancipated, "con un espíritu tan moderno y libre" (p.411) she swings into Macondo and breathes new life into the novel. As her name and characteristics make clear, she is also the most recent manifestation of that female strength and wisdom that has provided the necessary balance and direction in the Buendía household.

The creative power of women is embodied first and foremost in the character of Úrsula. It is she who journeys out of Macondo and discovers the all-important route connecting it with the rest of civilization. She displays the same initiative and strength throughout the novel, ferociously protecting the family, until her death somewhere between 115 and 122 years of age, which is so portentous it triggers a series of confusions throughout nature. Running parallel with the strength and intuitive wisdom of Úrsula, is that of Pilar Ternera, the prostitute and keeper of the brothel who is marginalized in the novel's social structures but central to its narrative strategies. As lover, mother, whore and permanent counsel to the Buendías she encompasses a continuum of female archetypes that guide them in their efforts to find peace and fulfilment. It is she who, now beyond 145 years of age, comforts Aureliano and prepares him for the final cataclysmic union with Amaranta Úrsula.

Significantly, Amaranta Úrsula is the product of both Úrsula (great-great-grandmother) and Pilar Ternera (great-grandmother) and we can read her emancipation and strength as a disruption of the madonna/whore dichotomy that had separated her ancient grandmothers.

It is in the combination of Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano, the shared solitude which is the subject of Chapter 6, that the various struggles in the novel are liberated and the Buendías enabled to finally realize their quest for integration. For while this quest begins with the cultivation of solitude, of an inner journey that involves fragmentation and uncertainty, the journey back becomes a journey forward through the mediation of polarities such as science and intuition, male and female; a mediation which then generates perspectives able to respond to the dialectical nature of reality, which is myth as well as history.

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NOTES

Chapter 5) SOLITUDE AND THE QUEST FOR INTEGRATION

1. Harris, The Infinite Rehearsal (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p.vii.
2. Lévi-Strauss, "And so we see that the analysis of myths is an endless task. Each step forward creates a new hope, realization of which is dependent on the solution of some new difficulty. The evidence is never complete." in The Raw and the Cooked, p.5.
3. For an analysis of the "madwoman" in Caribbean fiction in relation to R.D. Laing's theories of schizophrenia see Evelyn O' Callaghan, 'Interior Schisms Dramatised: The Treatment of the "Mad" Woman in the Work of Some Female Caribbean Novelists' in Out of the Kumbia: Caribbean Women and Literature, eds. Boyce Davies and Savory Fido (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990), pp.89-109.
4. R.D. Laing, The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise (London: Penguin, 1990 [1967]), p.105.
5. *ibid.* pp.84-107.
6. *ibid.* p.106.
7. Harris, Heartland, p.12.
8. See Chapter 2 (a), p.77.
9. Harris, The Guyana Quartet, p.384.
10. See eg. García Márquez, La hojarasca (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1983 [1955]), p.116.
11. Laing, pp.120-137.
12. *ibid.* p.123.
13. *ibid.* p.128.
14. See discussion of Cabezas in Chapter 3 (b), p.122.
15. Harris, Carnival, p.32.
16. Laing, p.131.
17. Cien años, p.345.
18. Laing, p.156.
19. Harris, The Guyana Quartet, p.117.
20. Michael Gilkes, 'Creative Schizophrenia: The Caribbean Cultural Challenge,' The Third Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture, 1986 (Coventry: Centre for Caribbean Studies/University of Warwick, 1986).

21. Harris quoted in introduction to The Radical Imagination. pp.11-15, (p.14).
22. Harris, The Guyana Quartet, pp.357-358.
23. Gregory Shaw, 'Art and Dialectic in the Work of Wilson Harris' in New Left Review, 153, (Sept.-Oct. 1985), 121-128, (p.125).
24. Harris, Carnival, p.25.
25. *ibid.* p.108.
26. Levitt, 'From Realism to Magic Realism: The Meticulous Modernist Fictions of García Márquez' in Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez, pp.227-242.
27. *ibid.* p.231.
28. Carpentier, 'De lo real maravilloso americano' in Tientos y Diferencias. see pp.116-117.
29. García Márquez, Cien años. p.59.
30. For a lucid discussion of postmodernism and an analysis of characteristic postmodernist strategies see Linda Hutcheon, 'Representing the Postmodern' in The Politics of Postmodernism (London: Routledge, 1989), pp.1-29.
31. Helen Tiffin, 'Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History' in Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 23, no.1 (1988), 169-181.
32. *ibid.* p.179.
33. I refer here to Carpentier's sense of a 'faith' in the marvellous in 'De lo real maravilloso americano,' pp.116-117.
34. Cien años. p.175.
35. *ibid.* p.205.
36. Floyd Merrell, 'José Arcadio Buendía's Scientific Paradigms: Man in Search of Himself' in Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez, pp.21-32.
37. *ibid.* see p.23.
38. *ibid.* p.22.
39. *ibid.* p.27.
40. Cien años. p.131.
41. Roberto González Echevarría, 'Cien años de soledad: The Novel as Myth and Archive' in Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez, pp.107-123, (p.117).
42. Harris, Tumatumari (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p.63.
43. Harris, The Infinite Rehearsal, p.18.

44. *ibid.* p.30.
45. Harris, 'Literacy and the Imagination,' p.30.
46. Harris, The Infinite Rehearsal, p.33.
47. See his comments on Thomas Hardy and T.S.Eliot in 'The Fabric of the Imagination' in The Radical Imagination. pp.69-79, (pp.75-76).
48. An example Harris mentioned in conversation, 28th Jan.1993.
49. Harris, 'The Fabric of the Imagination,' p.75.
50. Harris, The Four Banks of the River of Space (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), pp.32-34.
51. See discussion of female characterisation in Green Mansions and Los pasos perdidos Chapter 4 (a), pp.?
52. See Antonio Benítez Rojo and Hilda O.Benítez, 'Eréndira liberada: la subversion del mito del macho occidental' in Revista-Iberoamericana. 50, nos. 128-129 (July-December, 1984), 1057-1075.
53. See Amparo Marmolejo-McWatt, 'Victim and Accuser: Contradictory Roles of Women in Gabriel García Márquez' *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*' in Out of the Kumbia. pp.249-260.
54. Harris, 'A Talk on the Subjective Imagination,' p.57.
55. Mark McWatt, 'The madonna/whore: womb of possibilities' in The Literate Imagination. pp.31-44.
56. Similarly the men - Donne and the other members of the crew in Palace of the Peacock. for instance, - are seen to move freely in and out of ususally conventional categories as life and death, reality, memory and dream, and in the end merge into a single consciousness.
57. McWatt, pp.38-41.
58. Michael Gilkes, 'The Madonna Pool: Woman as "Muse of Identity"' in Journal of West Indian Literature. 1, no.2 (June, 1987), 1-19, (p.4).
59. *ibid.* p.4.
60. See discussion of El general en su laberinto in the introduction to this thesis, p.4.

Chapter 6) SHARED SOLITUDE AND PSYCHIC RENEWAL

In the fictions of Wilson Harris and Gabriel García Márquez, then, solitude cannot be defined simply as a negative, as solitary isolation but, as with Jung's process of individuation and R.D. Laing's journey of the schizophrenic, emerges rather as a necessary condition and a prelude to creative and spiritual progress. This chapter will focus on three aspects of such progress as articulated in the narratives of both writers: the creative power of love as a gateway to transcendence, myth and the cross-cultural imagination, revisionary interpretations of the Conquest and of colonialism, and will demonstrate how these themes and strategies serve as creative bridges between people and cultures and through which the 'interconnectedness' explored in Chapter 7 becomes possible.

The search for the female principle, identified in Chapter 5 as key to the quest for integration, finds its completion in a complementarity of male and female energies.<sup>1</sup> This perspective is then dynamically linked in the texts of Harris and García Márquez with the creative power of love and the notion that lovers are, ideally, gateways to each other. In Cien años de soledad the condition of solitude, the exploration and recovery of one's own authentic consciousness, can only be positively sustained when combined with love, and love becomes the foremost regenerative and transcendent force in the novel. From the first lyrical description of José Arcadio's and Úrsula's lovemaking,<sup>2</sup> love and its sexual consummation acts as a breath of fresh air which constantly uplifts the text. We are told of José Arcadio and Pilar that "Fueron dos novios dichosos entre la muchedumbre, y hasta llegaron a sospechar que el amor podía ser un sentimiento más reposado y profundo que la



felicidad desaforada pero momentánea de sus noches secretas." (p.87)

When Rebecca and Aureliano fall in love with Crespi and Remedios respectively the whole atmosphere becomes suffused with love as if it has been injected with one of Melquíades' magic potions.<sup>3</sup> The ability to love is immediately positive in a character, described almost as something magical like the colour yellow which is a positive signifier throughout the novel. Petra Cotes, for instance, is first described as "una mulata limpia y joven, con unos ojos amarillos y almendrados que le daban a su rostro la ferocidad de una pantera, pero tenía un corazón generoso y una magnífica vocación para el amor" (p.234) and it is significant that in first describing the foreigners who descend upon Macondo, García Márquez says pointedly that they arrived "sin amor." (p.271)

The union of Meme and Mauricio Babilonia represents one of the first examples of a transcendent love affair:

Meme sintió el peso de su mano en la rodilla, y supo que ambos llegaban en aquel instante al otro lado del desamparo" (p.327)

and the need for solitude is closely allied with the experience of love: "Se volvió loca por él. Perdió el sueño y el apetito, y se hundió tan profundamente en la soledad, que hasta su padre se le convirtió en un estorbo." (p.327) But Mauricio is paralysed and ostracized from the community in one of the most tragic episodes in the novel so that love, at this point in time, is thwarted by external forces. It is not until the relationship between Petra Cotes and Aureliano Segundo that the text reveals how solitude can become the gateway to a lasting and loving solidarity. The misery of financial ruin arouses in both of them "el sentimiento de solidaridad" (p.373) and at last, after years of wild revelry and gaudy wealth, they find "el paraíso de la soledad compartida." (p.375) The attainment of such 'shared solitude,' of sustained and transcendent love, provides infinite renewal and fulfilment:

. . . llegaron a ser tan felices, que todavía cuando eran dos ancianos agotados seguían retozando como conejitos y peleándose como perros. (p.375)

But this is the shared solitude of Aureliano and Petra only, and the larger quest of the Buendía family does not find resolution until the final coming together of Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano Babilonia. The time it takes to reach this conclusion (*cien años de soledad*) is entirely consistent with the energy invested by both Harris and García Márquez in reclaiming the eclipsed word, *love*. For the representation of love, whether popular or literary, is often a romantic cliché where the role of the female is still severely conscripted within patriarchal structures. The need to deconstruct such clichés has produced a suspicion of the term so that the postmodern novel is more likely to parody, than promote, its generic forms. Harris and García Márquez do not exist outside of this context and indeed El amor en los tiempos del cólera is itself a parody of the love story, at the same time as it celebrates the triumph of love and the spiritual journey. In order to contextualize what Harris and García Márquez mean by the triumph or resurrection of love, and to distinguish this from a too easy popular and consumerist illusion, I would like to quote the connection Harris draws between the occult and love:

. . . the occult as it was understood in some ancient cultures, for example by the ancient alchemists, was a way in which one sensed a relationship between an inner and an outer body. One sensed a division in oneself. One sensed that the inner and the outer body had a secret kind of intercourse. Then you would get what the alchemists called the 'coniunctio' - the marriage between a man and a woman. This could become a sacramental reality possessing some kind of ecstatic moment in which two beings seem to pull together much that they have forfeited or lost, and gather those elements together again in their embrace. That sort of 'coniunctio' has nothing to do with possession. It is a touching, but not a seizing. It is a liberation. The two beings liberate each other, however close may be their intimate involvement. They do not possess each other. That is how the occult and love appeared to work for the ancient alchemists.<sup>4</sup>

Following this, Harris' treatment of love always includes both the separation without which there is no love, and the reunion, in which love actualizes itself. In this way, the complementarity of male and female energies, which is the completion of the search for the female principle, is also an (in)completion in that such dialectical oppositions resist closure in order to remain dynamic. This is the process which underpins/is at the heart of the "marvellous affair"<sup>5</sup> between Jonathan and Amaryllis in Carnival. There is no doubting the "ecstatic moment" which comes to fruition in the penultimate chapter:

We lived in yet out of our frames, we touched each other yet were free of possession, we embraced yet were beyond the net of greed, we were penetrated yet whole, closer together than we had ever been yet invisibly apart. We were ageless dream.

We subsisted upon genius of revolution of sensibility within the phantom animal in which we lay, a phantom that was so ancient it filled us with awe. Our naked flesh was inhabited by mutual generations clad in nothing but obsolescent organs, obsolescent youth. What obsolescence! What intimate renewal of being beyond age and youth! We were intimate, ageless being, we were four years short of thirty, we were young, we were old as the coition of the hills and waves miniaturized in our bodies. We were a dying fall into deeper orchestration of mutual spaces. (pp.123-124)

The lovers unite in an act of joyous physical love and their embrace encapsulates all the multiple histories through which the novel has journeyed in its quest for integration. As the language of the above description reveals, however, this is a marriage which resists the closure of the traditional happy ending. Just as Harris' prose is structured around dialectical oppositions - "in yet out of our frames," "penetrated yet whole" - so Amaryllis declares, in the closing lines of the novel, the essential ambiguity of relationship where progress remains dependent on a dynamic interplay of perspective:

'And now in mutual heart, mutual uncertainty across generations . . . The love that moves the sun and the other stars moves us now, my dearest husband, my dearest Jonathan, to respond with originality to each other's Carnival seas of innocence and

guilt, each other's Carnival lands of subterfuge and truth, and each other's Carnival skies of blindness and vision.' (p.172)

The treatment of love in García Márquez' El amor en los tiempos del cólera is also structured around hyperbole and disruption. The opening epigraph suggests a happy end to the search for the female principle:

En adelante van estos lugares:  
ya tienen su diosa coronada<sup>6</sup>

though it does not prepare us for the fifty-three years, seven months, and eleven days and nights that Florentino Ariza must wait before his love for Fermina Daza is finally consummated. In this long-distance love story we have an exaggerated, and often comic, version of the separation and reunion that characterizes Harris' treatment of love. Despite the many structural and thematic parodies of the love story,<sup>7</sup> however, this novel is no less concerned with the spiritual journey. From Florentino Ariza's early conviction that "los seres humanos no nacen para siempre el día en que sus madres los alumbran, sino que la vida los obliga otra vez y muchas veces a parirse a sí mismos" (p.213) to the final, and eternal, voyage of Florentino and Fermina on the Magdalena river, the theme of love intertwines with those of time and age to inspire the perspectives that finally see through "los tiempos del cólera." The cholera motif signifies on both a local and a universal level. Locally, it is metaphoric of Colombia's horrific civil wars which stretch throughout the long lifetimes of the principal characters. Direct reference to the political context is infrequent, but vivid:

En un mismo día vio pasar flotando tres cuerpos humanos, hinchados y verdes, con varios gallinazos encima. Pasaron primero los cuerpos de dos hombres, uno de ellos sin cabeza, y después el de una niña de pocos años cuyos cabellos de medusa se fueron ondulando en la estela del buque. Nunca supo, porque nunca se sabía, si eran víctimas del cólera o de la guerra, pero la tufarada nauseabunda contaminó en su memoria el recuerdo de Fermina Daza. (pp.184-185)

But the emphasis on the plural "los tiempos" seems to suggest both a recurrent cycle of death and destruction and an aspect of the human condition at large, which, in turn, universalizes the 'shared solitude' attained by Florentino and Fermina as a symbolic ideal.

It is the completion of this ideal which liberates one hundred years of solitude in Macondo, and the final, ecstatic relationship of Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano Babilonia is an epic example of the creative power of love. Secluded in solitude, these two break free of the external world and its recurrent malignity into a pre-lapsarian, unordered world of nature:

En aquel Macondo olvidado hasta por los pájaros, donde el polvo y el calor se habían hecho tan tenaces que costaba trabajo respirar, reclusos por la soledad y el amor y por la soledad del amor en una casa donde era casi imposible dormir por el estruendo de las hormigas coloradas, Aureliano y Amaranta Úrsula eran los únicos seres felices, y los más felices sobre la tierra. (p.436)

They renounce the habits of conventional reality and achieve the simple innocence and authenticity which Remedios the Beauty had always craved.<sup>6</sup> And as they ferociously make love, so do they triumphantly purge the remains of a previously unhappy and frustrated Buendía history:

En poco tiempo hicieron más estragos que las hormigas coloradas: destrozaron los muebles de la sala, rasgaron con sus locuras la hamaca que había resistido a los tristes amores de campanento del coronel Aureliano Buendía, y destriparon los colchones y los vaciaron en los pisos para sofocarse en tempestades de algodón. (p.437)

It is Amaranta Úrsula, the accumulated symbol of female strength and energy, who dominates their lovemaking:

. . . era Amaranta Úrsula quien comandaba con su ingenio disparatado y su voracidad lírica aquel paraíso de desastres, como si hubiera concentrado en el amor la indómita energía que la tatarabuela consagró a la fabricación de animalitos de caramelo. (p.437)

and it is a physical union in which all the previously erotic, innocent, transcendent aspects of love in the Buendía history find their fulfilment.<sup>7</sup> Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano attain the

ultimate ideal of both Harris and García Márquez "donde la única realidad cotidiana y eterna era el amor" (p.438) and it is in the integration of these two characters, the "one mutual heart" of Jonathan and Amaryllis, that the spiritual journey reaches its climax:

A medida que avanzaba el ambarazo se iban convirtiendo en un ser único, se integraban cada vez más en la soledad de una casa a la que sólo le hacía falta un último soplo para derrumbarse. (p.441)

The complexities of the novel's metafictional/mythical/historical ending, and the multiperspectives it demands of the reader, will be discussed in Chapter 7. At this point, it is important to note that the creative power of love is inextricably linked in the novel with García Márquez' use of myth and mythical frameworks, so that it is as myth that the final apocalypse of the Buendías, instigated by both Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano Babilonia, can be read as a liberation and a renewal. For in the same way as love provides a bridge to shared solitude in the narratives of Harris and García Márquez, so it is through myth and the cross-cultural imagination that both writers attempt to bridge the hybridity of experience which is the collective consciousness of the Americas.

In tracing the contexts which have shaped the narratives of contemporary writers in the Americas, Part One of this study emphasized the need to respond to myth as well as history, to an Amerindian and Afro-american as well as a European consciousness, and to the forms through which such perspectives have been articulated. This emerges in a variety of ways in the novels of Harris and García Márquez. Both writers are sensitive to the structure of myth and the resources of such a structure to disrupt the closed linearity of the historical narrative. At the core of the palimpsestic historical novel which is Cien años de soledad, for

instance, lies a primitive creation myth founded in violence and incest which completes its circular trajectory in the transgression of taboo and the birth of a child with a pig's tail. As is consistent with Lévi-Strauss' analysis of Bororo creation myths,<sup>10</sup> the act of transgression which, at the level of content, signals the destruction of community is also that which, at the level of form, instigates its transformation and evolution. The dialectical nature of myths, whose function Lévi-Strauss identifies as the mediation of polarities, is particularly appropriate to attempts by Harris and García Márquez to render a dialectical reality through the multiperspectives of the Americas. Some of these perspectives remain hidden, eclipsed by cycles of conquest, though they are available to the imaginative writer in what Harris calls "absent presences."<sup>11</sup> In his Amerindian tales The Sleepers of Roraima and The Age of the Rainmakers Harris draws on the remnants of ancient myth and a variety of mythological structures to retrieve the buried consciousness of now vanquished tribes. For Harris, re-integration of the fractured American psyche depends on the re-constitution of such latent spaces and the story of 'Couvade' will be analysed as a specific example of this process.

But the multidimensional nature of myths, their oral transmission and constant transformation, make it impossible for them to be known in their entirety.<sup>12</sup> In the contemporary context, Harris perceives further complication in the inevitable post-colonial hybridity of myth:

. . . when you go to the so-called Third World, the archetypes, if I may use that word . . . those archetypes, which they call 'native' archetypes, are all overlaid by European skeletons and archetypes as well. You will never activate them unless you activate the so-called "European" skeletons as well. They are locked together and there is no way around that.<sup>13</sup>

This sense of the layers of myth is characteristic of Cien años de soledad where no single myth or mythology prevails but where the

various ways in which myth is used give the whole novel a mythical character. As Harris goes on to say in the above interview, this focus on the layers of myth engenders a creative cross-culturalism in which the dynamic resources that lie at the heart of myth can be visualised as a response to the dilemmas of the present. It is in this way that myth appears in Harris' The Four Banks of the River of Space and García Márquez' Cien años de soledad and La increíble y triste historia . . . as both a creative bridge between cultures and as a resource through which stages of oppression can be revised.

The idea of a creative bridge or arch of community is particularly appropriate to the story of 'Couvade' in which Harris recreates a ritual dream of the Caribs to suggest an archetypal image of spiritual progress and renewal. The first of a Carib trilogy entitled The Sleepers of Roraima,<sup>14</sup> 'Couvade' is based on the vestiges of a Carib myth<sup>15</sup> and we are told in the author's note:

The purpose of *Couvade* was to hand on the legacy of the tribe - courage and fasting - to every newborn child. All ancestors were involved in this dream - animal as well as human, bird as well as fish. The dust of every thing, cassava bread (the Carib's staple diet), the paint of war, the cave of memories, were turned into a fable of history - the dream of *Couvade*. (p.13)

In rewriting this dream of *Couvade* Harris is challenging the conventional view that the Caribs have disappeared without trace. For while, at the level of content, the story tells of the imminent extinction of the Carib race, the creative potential of their legacy is explored ('relived') through its mythical form. It is significant that the dream is described as:

. . . some strange dream of history in which his grandfather's people feared they would vanish from the face of the earth.  
(p.18)

Although the historical perspective defines the Caribs as extinct, myth tilts the boundaries of such perspective to reveal the



reflections and circularities which continue to connect us with that past age.

The first line tells us that the name Couvade here means "sleeper of the tribe" and this immediately signals the journey into the unconscious which is about to be undertaken. Rather than the polarity of a conscious/unconscious life, however, the multilevels of dreaming/waking in the text enact a drama of consciousness akin to Jung's process of individuation in which the individual, having unlocked the personal unconscious to re-integrate the self, becomes aware of how that self is connected to all other selves in a much larger collective consciousness. In order to begin this journey Couvade must listen to "the ancestral voices of waterfall and forest" (p.16) and learn the intuitive perspective of the guacharo bird whose "uncanny reflexes (piercing vision and echoing wings) guided it through the darkest underground caves." (p.16) Although Couvade is ostensibly guided by the figure of his grandfather, that figure takes a variety of forms, benevolent ancestral lizard as well as ancient trickster, so that Couvade is forced to negotiate the shifting reality of his dream through a variety of means. Having entered the cave of ancestors which, like the myth of Yajé,<sup>18</sup> is described as a return to the womb, he wears the two disguises of half-bird, half-fish in an attempt to swim across to the spectre of his lost parents. When both of these fail Couvade realises that he must go to them in his own form and so removes the disguises:

He carefully restored the head-dress, spectacles, feathers  
to the ground of the cave, the scales and eyes of the fish to  
the wall where they shone now like stars and constellations.  
(pp.19-20)

Only when he exposes himself to his ancestors, becomes susceptible to them, does the bridge of souls appear to carry him across to the other bank of the stream. That this has been a symbolic, an

imaginative bridge, is made clear in the obvious reflection of this other bank:

No one was there to greet him but he saw that they had left their sunglasses suspended from a branch. Their head-dress too and the scales and eyes of a fish like a starry cloak which shone in the water against the trees. Couvade was glad. It was as if they wished to surrender to him all their disguises as he had surrendered his to them on his side of the cave. (p.21)

It is not that Couvade has crossed physically to another bank but that we (through him) have *altered* perspective. Through these journeys, these changes in perspective, Couvade becomes a part of the cycle which deconstructs, through connecting, polarities of hunter and hunted, friend and enemy.

The story is structured around various polarities which it becomes the function of the myth to mediate. The struggle between hunter and hunted reflects the history of the Caribs, their fierce reputation, and eventual conquest by another people. This is connected to, and contained within, images of male and female. The Carib practice of taking wives from the tribes they conquered engenders a cross-culturalism in the child (Couvade) who embodies both self and enemy. Chapter 3 tells us that the head-dress of feathers belonged to the father (huntsmen of night) and the scales and eyes of the fish to the mother (fishermen of night), revealing that the disguises Couvade had tried to inhabit had failed because both were necessarily partial. Although Couvade is initiated into the motherhood of the tribe, one of the most poetically rendered scenes of the journey:

He shook himself now - the dust of stars - as if he too danced to the music of the river. In fact his feet began to move and spin. Ballet of the fish. Dance of the fish. Song of the river. Net of the river. He said to his grandfather in an ecstasy of happiness, "I have caught her. My mother. She sings and dances in my net, in my heart. Song and dance of the fish painted on the wall of the cave." (p.27)

it is in the complementarity of male and female energies that the journey reaches its climax:

The fish-net of his mother, which was no other than the bird-cloak of his father, whirled and danced in the sky, then settled itself into the bridge of dawn. Couvade felt the presence of both his lost parents crossing and re-crossing the shimmering bridge. (p.31)

Chapter 3 is the longest section of the story and the one in which Couvade, having unlocked the personal unconscious to re-integrate the self, begins to connect to a larger collective consciousness; this is surrounded by two shorter, and then two yet shorter chapters or sections. As Mark McWatt has noted,<sup>17</sup> the story is thus structured to suggest three concentric circles, each deeper and more complex as you move towards the centre, suggesting images of the whirlpool or vortex, and in attempting a linear progression of story what the reader experiences is a cross-section of the whirlpool. The final Chapter 5, in which Couvade discovers the riddle of his name and identity, thus enacts the emergence from the whirlpool:

At long last the retreat began. Was it retreat of enemy or retreat of friend? The idol of the moon fell from the sky. The idol of the stars began to fade. The long ghostly armies crept across the blanket of tribes, the blanket of Couvade sound asleep in his hammock. And in the mouth of the cave where he dreamt he lay since the night his parents ran from the tribe, he too seemed to be passing into the light of freedom - a new sobering reflection - bridge of relationships. (p.34)

The historical moment when the Caribs are invaded is transfigured through myth to illuminate the freedom and evolution also present in that cross-cultural encounter as Couvade, the ritual dream of the Caribs, crosses the "bridge of relationships" to become an imaginative resource for the future Caribbean. Though Harris emphasizes the need to activate such resources, such latent spaces in the cross-cultural psyche, he does not underestimate the task:

Uncertain of the figures coming alive on the wall of the cave. Uncertain there was not a long hard way to go before the idols and paintings would truly melt, truly live, birth of compassion, birth of love. (p.35)

The task of liberating Eréndira in García Márquez' La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada is no less momentous. As the title indicates, this is the realm of folk-tale or epic fairy-tale, rather than sacred ritual, and elements of romance, allegory and comic irony produce a very different style to that of 'Couvade.' Nevertheless, the various layers of myth in the text, as well as the subverting of static archetypes to generate more dynamic mythical vision, reveal interesting points of contact. Like Couvade, Eréndira is a child in the care of a single grandparent and her story also tells of the journey to maturity and integration. "El viento de su desgracia" which opens the story signals the loss of childhood, the maturity her face acquires at the end, her final release. At the level of content, the story relates a tale of destruction and disappearance - "La increíble y triste historia" - and again the use of mythic structures challenge and reverse this perspective to illuminate Eréndira's path to liberation and renewal.

With the extravagance of the first sentence, García Márquez firmly places his text in the world of myth and fairy-tale:

Eréndira estaba bañando a la abuela cuando empezó el viento de su desgracia. La enorme mansión de argamasa lunar, extraviada en la soledad del desierto, se estremeció hasta los estribos con la primera embestida.<sup>13</sup>

Although located in the area of Richacha in the north of Colombia, this desertscape is transfigured through the cross-cultural imagination to suggest the hybridity of experience in the Americas. There are references to Amerindian and Afro-american as well as European ancestry. Eréndira's grandfather is Amadís the Great, a European smuggler/adventurer in the Americas, his name signifying the mythic heroes of Medieval Romance Tales. The grandfather of Ulises is also a mythical character and Ulises remains connected to him by the invisible thread perceived by Eréndira's grandmother:

Tenía un aura irreal y parecía visible en la penumbra por el fulgor propio de su belleza.

- Y tú - le dijo la abuela, - ¿dónde dejaste las alas?

- El que las tenía era mi abuelo - contestó Ulises con su naturalidad, - pero nadie lo cree.

La abuela volvió a examinarlo con una atención hechizada. "Pues yo sí lo creo," dijo. (p.108)

Recalling the character in García Márquez' 'Un señor muy viejo con unas alas enormes,' the wings that belonged to Ulises' grandfather connect him to the paradigm of Afro-american myth. Ulises is himself the quintessentially hybrid American, the product of both European conquerer and indigenous conquered. His mother is a Guajira Indian who "conocía los secretos más antiguos de su sangre" (p.123) and his father a Dutch farmer. Neither parents speak each other's native tongue and it is Ulises who, partaking of both discourses, mediates between them.<sup>19</sup> The name Ulises itself signifies the most epic of mythic heroes, as he reminds Eréndira:

- ¿Cómo es que te llamas?

- Ulises.

- Es nombre de gringo - dijo Eréndira.

- No, de navegante. (p.111)

For Caribbean artists the figure of Ulysses - exile, warrior, wanderer, trickster, victim - has long been a metaphor for the migrating self, and a recurrent archetype of the contemporary condition.<sup>20</sup> As Wilson Harris comments:

Odysseus has been drowning in the Caribbean sea and in the oceans for centuries, drowning yet resuscitating in rehearsals of Troy to fight wars of colonial expansion and conquest. It is no longer possible for him to arrive in New World El Dorados that are in equation with ancient Ithacas as a single man. He has become plural and is borne upon the shoulders - re-born within the flesh - of many cultures.<sup>21</sup>

The ships that dock on García Márquez' Caribbean coast are thus Greek as well as Spanish and the tales of their epic journeys are humourously intertwined in the Grandmother's night-time raves:

- Eso fue por los tiempos en que llegó el barco griego - dijo. - Era una tripulación de locos que hacían felices a las mujeres y no les pagaban con dinero sino con esponjas, unas esponjas vivas que después andaban caminando por dentro de las

casas, gimiendo como enfermos de hospital y haciendo llorar a los niños para beberse las lágrimas. (p.145)

In this version, however, Ulises is only a potential hero.

There is no underestimating his presence - "era un adolescente dorado, de ojos marítimos y solitarios, y con la identidad de un ángel furtivo" (p.105) - or the creative power of his union with Eréndira. Love engenders in him the magical ability to change the colour of glass and in sleeping with Ulises for love Eréndira transgresses the rule of the Grandmother, which is the route to her escape. These three figures - Eréndira, Grandmother, Ulises - construct the traditional mythic pattern of the captive, the terrible beast and the hero and the story seems set to repeat the victory of Perseus over Medusa to liberate Andromeda. Eréndira reflects, at first, the passive role of the captive maiden who finds her counterpart in the fairy-tale characters of Sleeping Beauty and Snow White. She subverts these paradigms, however, in playing an increasing part in her own liberation. She dominates Ulises and becomes the intellectual perpetrator of the Grandmother's death. Ulises, on the other hand, proves to be an inadequate hero and is overwhelmed by his slaying of the Grandmother/dragon. Eréndira's flight at the end signifies her escape from both the patriarchal structures that had abused her and the static archetypes that had contained her role. As she leaves this world, Ulises remains confined by it.

In their article 'Eréndira liberada: La subversion del mito del macho occidental' Antonio Benítez Rojo and Hilda O. Benítez demonstrate how this process symbolizes Eréndira's escape from the unconscious, where she has been confined by archetypal psychology and Jung's notion of the anima to serve only as foil to the male quest for integration. As the article goes on to say:

Es posible afirmar, pues, que el texto de García Márquez, si bien alude a situaciones arquetípicas tradicionales, rompe la cáscara mitológica para establecerse como un nuevo modelo de mito en lo que respecta a la evolución del ego y el desarrollo de la conciencia individual de la mujer.<sup>22</sup>

Though often couched in the form of a sacred truth myths are never static, so that even myths which reflect the biases of patriarchal structures, either in the writing down or in the analysis, can be reshaped, reconstituted, to respond to the dilemmas of the present. Like all myths, García Márquez' La increíble y triste historia . . . is multidimensional both in its thematic concerns and its structural mediation of polarities. It is significant, for instance, that as Bréndira succeeds in reversing the cycle of her own misfortune she seizes the "chaleco del oro" (symbol of the gains stolen by the Conquerer/Grandmother from the conquered America/Eréndira) and runs with it (symbol of her own past) back into the heartland.

This usurping of the victor/victim stasis forms the first stage in Harris' quantum journey through The Four Banks of the River of Space. The Colombian interior is translated in this novel into the rainforests of Guyana which are, for Anselm, "the heartland of the twentieth century." (p.24) In crossing the rivers of the living and the dead<sup>23</sup> Anselm's task is to move into hidden spaces, to inhabit a variety of half-real, half-mythical identities that will challenge static archetypes of twentieth century history. As he declares on The First Bank:

We may only heal the wounded archetype when we live the divide at the heart of language and place its enormity on many shoulders . . . (p.30)

The king of thieves whom Anselm inhabits in this first chapter is a multidimensional historical and psychological character - a Guyanan miner called Black Pizarro with antecedents in Christian and Colonial history, who also signals an aspect of self. As Harris makes explicit:

He is the thief who mocked Christ and turned his face away from paradise's door. Such a thief lives in us all and in a door that haunts us in every century. (p.14)

A composite figure of this king of thieves emerges at the end of the chapter to lead a procession for the victim and make an offering in his honour:

It was as if in so doing he released for an instant the heavy burden of gold he had stolen across the centuries, the heavy obsession that tormented him and his fellow miners whom he led. He became the last tormented thief in the world in that miraculous instant. (p.40)

In illuminating the contiguity that exists between "those who bury and those who are buried" (p.40) Anselm breaks the absoluteness of the archetype (The King of Thieves) and transcends the stasis of victor and victim. In recognising this "quantum stranger" (p.6) as also a part of himself he is able to cross to The Second Bank where he becomes the Carnival Heir of Civilizations.

As the above title indicates, Anselm proceeds on his journey through a variety of masks and personas. Like Odysseus, "he has become plural and is borne upon the shoulders - re-born within the flesh - of many cultures."<sup>24</sup> The Four Banks of the River of Space is a cross-cultural rewriting of The Odyssey, but one in which the characters of Ulysses and Penelope are fragmented throughout the text, both as partial aspects of the self and as complex revisions of the myth that frames them. In transporting the Classical epic to the Guyanan rainforests, Harris also elicits parallels with Christian and Amerindian myths to reflect the cross-cultural hybridity of the Americas and to demonstrate bridges of myth that connect apparently distinct cultures throughout the world. In the same way as Jung regarded dreams as communications from the unconscious and identified recurrent images (archetypes) that could be found in all epochs and which served to connect the individual with the totality of his/her psyche:



. . . they bring into our ephemeral consciousness an unknown psychic life belonging to a remote past. It is the mind of our unknown ancestors, their way of thinking and feeling, their way of experiencing life and the world, gods and men.<sup>28</sup>

so Anselm is the 'living dreamer' who is able to re-integrate his own, and the collective, American psyche through seizing the unexpected correspondences that appear on his journey through the cross-cultural imagination.

Anselm's meeting with Penelope on The Second Bank is typical of the way in which Harris writes such multitudinous significance into a single encounter. Penelope is an English missionary who, with her second husband Ross George, worked in South America from 1948 to 1966. The Preface tells us that they both died in Kent, England in the early 1980's. Penelope carries with her the shadow of her dead husband, Simon, a British officer who died in the First World War. Together, these three represent the colonizing powers of the army and the Christian church. Anselm meets them on The Second Bank where he travels back into his own past in the Guyanan rainforest:

Penelope and Ross re-emerged from the margins of nothingness into which they had almost vanished. The depletion of spiritual memory, the curious fast of memory which I endured, strengthened in a paradoxical way the open, broken yet flowering seed of visualized presences within me, before me. (p.52)

These presences are described as "unsuspected and piercing ironies of spirit that nailed one into the congregation of all one's characters and even into the shoes of the king of thieves." (p.52) They are thus a part of the community of being each of us carries within and with whom, Harris urges, we must become acquainted. Language and imagery - "congregation," "the king of thieves" - signal a Christian framework, although the reference to "the king of thieves" is already mutilated in echoing the archetype confronted on The First Bank. The focus on "the shoes" reflects Harris' method of sudden, concrete visualization to hinge a complex psychological

concept. The oblique reference to the spectre of Christ in the use of the verb "nailed" is picked up in the next movement:

One bears the wounds of the past into the future and the present. One is oneself and other than oneself . . . it was thus that I limped, as though nailed upon an Imaginary walking tree in stained glass window that I painted, into the presence of the last missionaries on earth . . . (p.53)

The use of the capital "Imaginary" draws attention to the multiple connotations that are being exploited in the linguistic structure. Anselm is both subject and object here, experiencing a connection while at the same time painting/imagining the tableau of that connection. It is significant that Anselm is walking "into the presence" of Penelope for she, as feminine Wisdom, draws him into her canvas, as well as the other way around.

Penelope speaks at this point and informs Anselm of her relationship to Simon and to Ross. Simon is the "epic soldier," (p.53) a Ulyssean figure whose heroism is challenged by an emerging female voice:

. . . she whispered almost under her breath - 'I shall tell you later about some of the terrible things he did to me despite the many decorations he wore on his chest. (p.53)

Ross - "who was no base suitor at Penelope's court" (p.25) - is the husband with whom she lives the sacramental marriage. Since his death in 1981, and her own in 1982, she tells Anselm that she has been weaving a coat:

'I have been slaving at a coat for many a month, many a year, in this day or century. A coat that is woven of the fabric of sunset, the stillness, the transience of flame. A coat that is as much a tapestry of the world, as of fire and water, to fit the shoulder of a hill, or the body of rock in a Waterfall. (p.34)

The coat that never fits Ross or Simon is also "the coat of tradition that never quite seems to fit the globe" (p.58) or Anselm's narrative which is constantly disrupted by Penelope:

'Did you really put that key there, Penelope, in the loom of tradition without knowing you had done so . . . ?' (p.58)

The image of Penelope as feminine Wisdom, and the importance of her perspective in guiding Anselm along his journey, is a constant theme throughout the novel. In this meeting it is Penelope who illuminates the nature of their dynamic interplay:

*You painted me into the Day of my age, the cathedral of stained-glass window sunset, as if the needle with which I work and sew were a match. The match of sunset. And because of the impermanence of darkness and light the match of sunrise as well. (p.54)*

The cyclical way in which Penelope appears and reappears is reflected in her unravelling of the garment that is never complete:

*'Yes,' she continued, 'always a discrepancy. And as a consequence I unravel the work I have done, unstitch everything, and start all over again from the very beginning whenever that was. I unravel my Day and start all over again. (p.54)*

Penelope is involved in the revisionary cycle, the revision of tradition and of static archetypes, and her next words make explicit the echoes of sunset and sunrise that have linked her with the Aztec myth of Venus/Quetzalcoatl:

*'I shall be emancipated woman in heaven. Ageless sunset and sunrise woman for all I know. A status of Wisdom, a status of elemental Wisdom, not easily achievable on earth! The perfect fit, the perfect marriage between light and darkness, Night and Day. (pp.54-55)*

In an example of just three pages, then, we can trace threads of Christian, ancient Greek and ancient pre-Columbian imagery as Harris invests in the figure of Penelope a variety of cross-cultural associations, which serve to connect overlapping cycles of history and myth. As Anselm says:

*- in drawing you out of the margins of nothingness into visualized being - I needed to bridge the centuries-long Night, the Night of ancient Greece into North African desert Night where Simon, your first and jealous husband, fought in Montgomery's army, the Night of Spain into the Night of South America where the reincarnated thief ransacked the gold of the Incas. (p.57)*

As the twentieth century draws to a close and Anselm unravels cycles of oppression to reveal "a theatre of interchangeable masks"

it is the spectre of Penelope that appears to spin the cycle of a new day:

This rain of night seemed to glimmer in the stars. Captors and captives began to loom in the new darkness of the Dream, the new guardian rocks, the new guardianship of sky and cloud at the heart of the Waterfall of space, a theatre of interchangeable masks and fates and elements upon savages and civilizations. The rain that fell upon us was so fine-spun and delicate that it seemed an impossibility when within it we discerned the burden and mystery of the rising sun. (p.161)

This emphasis on the cycle of an epoch, and on the potential for resurrection through which life renews itself, is consistent with Amerindian cosmologies as discussed in Chapter 2. Amerindian cultures do not perceive the contemporary world as existing somehow detached from a remote and scarcely imaginable 'beginning of time' but as one of a *series* of creations, whose beginnings and endings are the matter of prime concern. In this way, Cien años de soledad begins with the founding of Macondo, with a discovery and conquest, and ends in a fierce cyclone similar to the ending of the first two world ages as documented by the Quechua, the Maya, the Toltecs and the peoples of the Southwest.<sup>26</sup> The cyclical nature of the Amerindians' calculation of time is also reflected in the novel. The constant repetitions begin to convince Úrsula that time is not passing, but turning in a circle, as she says on one occasion:

Ya esto me lo sé de memoria . . . Es como si el tiempo diera vueltas en redondo y hubiéramos vuelto al principio." (p.240)

or as the inscription in the Chilam Balam reminds us:

"Thirteen score years, and then it will always return again."<sup>27</sup>

Within this overall scheme, the novel is structured around various characteristics of myth and mythical vision. There is little distinction between the physical and spiritual worlds and, as analysis of the characters of Melquíades and Prudencio will reveal, the spirits of the dead are intimately entwined with the experiences of the living. Just as there is no separation between life and

death, so the human world remains intimately and poetically linked with both the animal and plant kingdom. A swarm of yellow butterflies signals the presence of Mauricio Babilonia, the dove becomes the special image of José Arcadio Buendía, and the aged patriarch becomes so at one with the chestnut tree in his retreat from the world that:

Un tufo de hongos tiernos, de flor de palo, de antigua y reconcentrada intemperie impregnó el aire del dormitorio cuando empezó a respirarlo el viejo colosal macerado por el sol y la lluvia. (p.188)

Many of the deaths in the novel are greeted by a supernatural occurrence signifying a sense of poetic justice, like the musical instruments and watches that stop when Crespi dies, or the rain of yellow flowers in honour of José Arcadio:

Poco después, cuando el carpintero le tomaba las medidas para el ataúd, vieron a través de la ventana que estaba cayendo una llovizna de minúsculas flores amarillas. Cayeron toda la noche sobre el pueblo en una tormenta silenciosa, y cubrieron los techos y atascaron las puertas, y sofocaron a los animales que durmieron a la intemperie. Tantas flores cayeron del cielo, que las calles amanecieron tapizadas de una colcha compacta, y tuvieron que despejarlas con palas y rastrillos para que pudiera pasar el entierro. (p.190)

The lifetimes of the characters do not exist in conventional time. Francisco the Man is almost two hundred years old, Úrsula lives somewhere between 115 and 122 years and Pilar is over 145 years of age when she dies. It is only within this concept of mythical time that certain of the episodes in the novel can be comprehended. When Aureliano Babilonia wanders through the old town, for example, we are confronted with a sudden and startling interaction of events which totally destroys a conventional time scheme:

Recorrí las calles polvorientes y solitarias, examinando con un interés más científico que humano el interior de las casas en ruinas . . . Trató de reconstruir con la imaginación el arrasado esplendor de la antigua ciudad de la compañía bananera, cuya piscina seca estaba llena hasta los bordes de podridos zapatos de hombre y zapatillas de mujer, y en cuyas casas desbaratadas por la cizafia encontró el esqueleto de un perro alemán todavía atado a un argolla con una cadena de acero, y un teléfono que repicaba, repicaba, repicaba, hasta que él lo descolgó, entendió

lo que una mujer angustiada y remota preguntaba en inglés, y le contestó que sí, que la huelga había terminado, que los tres mil muertos habían sido echados al mar, que la compañía bananera se había ido, y que Macondo estaba por fin en paz desde hacía muchos años. (p.147)

Despite the scientific interest with which Aureliano meticulously observes the scene, the voice from the past appears as a bizarre, almost surreal intervention to remind us of the historical massacre that has become a myth, and as a powerful symbol of the anguish that continues to surround such atrocities.

Through the use of mythological structures to both frame and disrupt the historical narrative, Latin American history itself becomes a sort of myth,<sup>28</sup> though one in which its cycles of oppression can be re-visioned to reveal a capacity for renewal. Autobiographical documentations such as Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú remind us that the persecution of indigenous peoples is not something which can be consigned, in civilized relief, to the memory of a barbarous past. It is in this context that we can understand how two Guajira Indians of royal blood come to be servants in the Buendía household, and how ancient tribes such as that of Melquíades are forced to wander the earth peddling their goods. But despite their low economic and social status, the Amerindians in the novel are privileged in their knowledge of the workings of nature and of the spirit. It is significant, for example, that it is they who understand the nature and meaning of the plagues of insomnia and loss of memory. Melquíades is himself a kind of eternal priest-king. He has many of the attributes of the shaman, the traditional priest-doctor of the Amerindians, and like the shaman is pre-eminent in his knowledge of myths and of the meaning of myths. His personal relationship to José Arcadio Buendía is very much that of the shamanic healer as described in Chapter 2. The shaman combined both science and ritual in his role as spiritual healer and it is in this

dual capacity that Melquiades befriends and guides José Arcadio along the spiritual path. The shaman reserved his strongest medicine for the most hazardous path of all, that through death, which he would have travelled himself at least once. And, in the same way, Melquiades returns from the dead many times to guide successive generations of Buendias in their attempts to cultivate the perspectives needed to recover the past and their own cycle of creation. In his description of the shaman, Wilson Harris could in fact be describing Melquiades:

The process of shamanism resembles a nervous breakdown. The shaman, as we know, is likely to appear in the tribe in times of crisis and his role . . . is an indispensable creative attempt to see through or break through a hang-over of the past . . . and to make of every inner divergence, every subtle omen of change - subsistence of memory to feed imagination in the future.<sup>29</sup>

Melquiades' manuscript, the novel we have been reading, represents this "subsistence of memory" but it cannot be read by the Buendias until they have translated (transgressed)<sup>30</sup> and decoded (deconstructed) historical parameters to finally reveal the perspectives through which the text/their own identity can be deciphered:

. . . Melquiades no había ordenado los hechos en el tiempo convencional de los hombres, sino que concentró un siglo de episodios cotidianos, de modo que todos coexistieran en un instante. (p.446)

This recalls the "quantum quetzalcoatl mathematics" through which, Harris argues, we must learn to re-apprehend the world and, as Chapter 7 will explore, it is this multiperspective which enables Aureliano Babilonia to recover the past and attain the psychic integration that will "feed imagination in the future."

Although José Arcadio Buendia was unable to synthesize such a perspective, the reappearance of Prudencio Aguilar enables him to journey through mythical time and to re-integrate an aspect of his own personal solitude. Prudencio is a figure of Kanaima<sup>31</sup> who

enacts revenge upon wrong-doers and can be seen as a projection of conscience. José Arcadio had attempted to flee Prudencio/Kanaima by leaving the scene of his crime, a journey that ends in the founding of Macondo. But the reappearance of Prudencio in Macondo signals the need for reconciliation and the completion of a journey, for it is Prudencio who, finally released of his burden, acts as shaman in José Arcadio's journey to death.<sup>32</sup>

An Amerindian mythical framework enables us to read the wanderings of characters like Melquíades and Prudencio Aguilar as integral to the larger quest which is Cien años de soledad. For like all cycles of creation, the novel contains a multiplicity of quests that must be embarked upon before its own journey is complete. As in Harris' texts, these are cross-cultural journeys that also echo a variety of biblical and classical myths - as in the Assumption of Remedios the Beauty, the Ulyssean figure of Colonel Aureliano or the stories of Genesis, the Flood and Apocalypse. Although this multilayering of myth and mythical echoes is part of the comic exuberance of the novel, as in the vision of Amaranta sailing to death with the mail, it is also the strategy through which García Márquez suggests the cross-cultural frameworks that intersect in Macondo/the Americas. For it is as a historic meeting ground that we can understand how a novel so rooted in a single place (Macondo) can also revolve around the theme of a journey. Although some of the Buendías travel out of Macondo, it is the influence of the waves of people who arrive there which provides the overwhelming point of contact. The text's numerous references to the Chronicles and to the period of Discovery and Conquest remind us how Latin America was invented by the colonial mentality which documented this point of contact. But in reversing these perspectives and imagining Macondo/the Americas while it is being



'discovered' and invaded by others, García Márquez revises the dominant version and, like the shaman, breaks through this "hang-over of the past" to suggest a capacity for renewal.

When the first Arabs arrive, for instance, they are described in terms reminiscent of the Chronicles:

. . . llegaron los primeros árabes de pantuflas y argollas en las orejas, cambiando collares de vidrio por guacamayas.  
(pp.93-94)

Columbus' men offered glass beads to the natives in return for pieces of gold. Columbus himself saw the existence of macaws as proof that he had reached India. The exchange as described in Cien años takes place on an equal footing, each person fascinated by the novelty of the other. This perspective revises the dominant version of the Chronicles, however, which saw the natives' fascination with the glass beads as proof of their ignorance. By substituting the macaws for the pieces of gold, García Márquez subtly interweaves the evidence of Columbus' own ignorance, emphasizing that fantasy is always a question of cultural assumptions.

To the natives of Macondo/the Americas it is the travellers/Conquistadores who are newcomers to their world and who bring magical, fantastical things that disturb a harmonious framework. The Buendías look on in a matter-of-fact way as successive waves of foreigners crave what, to them, seems quite ordinary. With the arrival of the Banana Company, for instance, Aureliano comments:

- Miren la vaina que nos hemos buscado - solía decir entonces el coronel Aureliano Buendía, - no más por invitar un gringo a comer guineo. (p.272)

As was discussed in Chapter 1 (a), the 'bananization' of Central and South America becomes one of the cruellest episodes in the period of neo-colonial domination by the U.S. The strike of the banana workers in Macondo, and their consequent massacre by the authorities, is a recurrent memory in the collective Buendía

consciousness and, as such, continues to challenge its absence from all historical documentation. By providing more than one perspective, García Márquez retrieves these latent spaces in the collective psyche to revise the "one-sided conquistadorial realism"<sup>33</sup> of the Conquest and of colonialism.

Wilson Harris has emphasized the need to develop complementary perspectives "in which the 'I' narrator descends into the horseman, into the conquistador"<sup>34</sup> and we can see examples of this in the way that Anselm inhabits the figure of the king of thieves in The Four Banks of the River of Space. Like García Márquez, Harris rehearses scenes of conquest and colonialism in his writing in order to create a dialogue between victor and victim, a comic and ironic, as well as a mythic dialogue, that does not ignore the reality of history but attempts to see through the oppression and fragmentation it records. Through these complementary perspectives:

The whole thing is rehearsed so that a kind of line comes through. It's not an evasion because it does not evade the wounds which have been inflicted on the society - it's not an evasion - but yet a line comes through that seems to go deep into the past.<sup>35</sup>

This is the line that comes through 'Couvade' and the line that Bréndira follows back into the heartland. And it is the deciphering of this line which illuminates the final apocalypse of the Buendias as not the end of Latin America but the end of neo-colonialism and its conscious or unconscious collaborators.

The path to shared solitude, then, is outlined in the works of Harris and García Márquez through the creative power of love, the resources of myth and the cross-cultural imagination and revisionary interpretations of the Conquest and of colonialism. As analysis of the texts in this chapter has shown, it is the combination of these themes and strategies that enables the psychic renewal and creative capacity to embark on the final journey to re-integration. This

journey remains dependent on a dynamic interplay of perspectives in which freedom and wholeness is always partial. As Jonathan and Amaryllis are reminded in their initiation into the journey home:

Freedom is partial and as such your private freedoms, the sacred inner vows you take for granted, relate you to - interlink you with - others who are in chains and whose vows are mute.<sup>36</sup>

NOTES

Chapter 6) SHARED SOLITUDE AND PSYCHIC RENEWAL

1. This completion is also an (in)completion dependent as it is upon both separation and reunion. This is discussed in relation to Harris' treatment of love.
2. García Márquez, Cien años. p.79.
3. ibid. p.120.
4. Harris, 'Unfinished Genesis: A Personal View of Cross-Cultural Tradition' in The Radical Imagination. pp.93-102, (p.95).
5. The phrase used by Harris in 'Originality and Tradition' in The Radical Imagination, pp. 117-134, (p.126).
6. García Márquez, El amor en los tiempos del cólera (Madrid: Mondadori, 1987, [1985]), epigraph quoted from Leandro Díaz.
7. As in the description of the hero (p.76) or Tránsito Ariza's advice to her son (p.80).
8. Cien años. p.437.
9. ibid. pp.437-438.
10. See Lévi-Strauss' structural analysis of Bororo myths in The Raw and the Cooked. pp.35-65.
11. Harris, 'The Absent Presence: The Caribbean, Central and South America' in The Radical Imagination. pp.81-92, (p.88).
12. As Lévi-Strauss says in his introduction to The Raw and the Cooked: "But I do not hope to reach a stage at which the subject matter of mythology, after being broken down by analysis, will crystallize again into a whole with the general appearance of a stable and well-defined structure. Apart from the fact that the science of myths is still in its infancy, so that its practitioners must consider themselves fortunate to obtain even a few tentative, preliminary results, we can already be certain that the ultimate state will never be attained, since were it theoretically possible, the fact still remains that there does not exist, nor ever will exist, any community or group of communities whose mythology and ethnography (and without the latter the study of myths is ineffectual) can be known in their entirety. The ambition to achieve such knowledge is meaningless, since we are dealing with a shifting reality, perpetually exposed to the attacks of a past that destroys it and of a future that changes it." (p.3).
13. Harris in interview with Alan Riach, in The Radical Imagination. pp.33-65, (pp.40-41).
14. Harris, 'Couvade' in The Sleepers of Roraima (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp.13-36.

15. Documented in such sources as: W.E.Roth, An Inquiry into the Animism and Folklore of the Guyana Indians (New York: Johnson Reprint [1970]) First published as Thirtieth Annual Report of U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1908-9).

16. See discussion Chapter 2 (a) p.77.

17. Mark McWatt, 'Form and Originality: The Amerindian Fables of Wilson Harris' in JWIL, 1, no.2 (1987), 35-49, (p.38).

18. García Márquez, La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada (Madrid: Mondadori 1987, [1972]), pp.87-155, (p.87).

19. See eg. the dialogue on p.124.

20. See eg. Walcott, The Odyssey (London: Faber and Faber, 1993).

21. Harris, 'The Absent Presence: The Caribbean Central and South America,' pp.91-92.

22. Antonio Benítez Rojo and Hilda O. Benítez, 'Eréndira Liberada: La subversión del mito del macho occidental,' p.1069.

23. The visible river of the living, and the invisible river of the dead, form the four banks of the river of space, as will be discussed in Chapter 7.

24. Harris, 'The Absent Presence: The Caribbean Central and South America' p.92.

25. Jung: Selected Writings. p.223.

26. As discussed in Chapter 2(a), there is striking agreement about the first two ages - they ended respectively in a flood and in prolonged solar eclipse, both catastrophes being directly or indirectly the result of malfunction in the sky or upper regions.

27. Quoted in Todorov, The Conquest of America. p.84.

28. See Roberto González Echevarría, 'Cien años de soledad: The Novel as Myth and Archive' in Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez. pp.107-123, which provides an interesting discussion of how Latin American history is narrated in the language of myth, though its conclusions on the use of myth are somewhat reductive.

29. Harris, 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' (Georgetown: National History and Arts Council, Ministry of Information And Culture, 1970), p.22.

30. On the transgressive nature of translation in the novel see Anibal González, 'Translation and the Novel: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*' in Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez. pp.271-282.

31. See Galeano's reworking of the myth as 'La Conciencia' in Los nacimientos, pp.44-45.

32. See Prudencio's guiding of José Arcadio through the rooms of reality to the room of death in Cien años, p.189.

33. Quoted in Chapter 5 (p.172) [from Harris, The Radical Imagination, p.14].

34. Harris, 'Literacy and the Imagination,' p.26.

35. *ibid.* p.26.

36. Carnival, p.128.

Chapter 7) COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE  
NATURE OF PSYCHIC WHOLENESS

The global context of oppression and destruction is always present in the work of Harris and García Márquez and the individual spiritual journey constantly interlinked with the larger quest for freedom and wholeness. This quest takes the form of a complex, and continuous, psychological journey in which stages 6 and 7 of Laing's journey of the schizophrenic are completed only to be repeated with the realisation of "the everlasting stranger one is despite every homecoming."<sup>1</sup> This journey home takes place in specific geographical and historical contexts as both writers are involved in a post-colonial attempt to reclaim and rename the colonized lands of the Americas, responding to myth as well as history, oral and written traditions. These post-colonial journeys are also journeys into postmodernity, into the structures of language and narrative form and the inevitable partiality of both. In the texts of Harris and García Márquez, however, the self-consciously metafictional voice which emerges is neither pessimistic nor self-consuming. An emphasis on the creative capacity of the spiritual journey is constantly linked to the process of recovering or reconstructing reality, reality that is no longer realistic but, like the quantum universe, relative, uncertain, complementary. It is in this way that the quest to re-integrate the fractured psyche of the Americas can be read as paradigmatic of the larger quest for integration and wholeness. Wholeness remains "an insoluble paradox"<sup>2</sup> in the narratives of both writers, but one in which the

'interconnectedness' of reality is revealed. In Carnival Harris

writes:

Wholeness releases partiality to confront itself in others as a necessary threshold into the rebirth and the unity of Mankind beyond the rhetoric of salvation, beyond the rhetoric of damnation. Wholeness is a third dimension in which every mask suffers the kinship of exchange.<sup>3</sup>

With close reference to the processes of carnival and quantum physics, Harris fragments the realist sense of the absolute status of character to suggest partial and interchangeable aspects of a collective consciousness in whose dynamic exchange resides the possibility of psychic wholeness. Although García Márquez' texts do not consciously engage with scientific theory, their status as quantum fiction has been noted critically<sup>4</sup> and this chapter will investigate how the principles of relativity, uncertainty and complementarity, which underpin ongoing debates in the new physics, shape the narrative forms and structures of both writers in their attempts to recover a reality in which the spiritual journey can be validated.

The impact of the new physics,<sup>5</sup> especially on the way reality is perceived in the twentieth century, cannot be underestimated. Niels Bohr described his own task in terms of a journey of discovery:

Our penetration into the world of atoms, hitherto closed to the eyes of man, is indeed an adventure which may be compared with the great journeys of discovery of the circumnavigators and the bold explorations of astronomers into the depths of celestial space.<sup>6</sup>

Like the journeys of the circumnavigators and the explorations of astronomers, the physicists' investigation into matter forces us to reimagine the world through new, and often multiple, perspectives. Newton had constructed a world which remained the same no matter how you looked at it; Einstein's theories of relativity (1905, 1916) and theories of quantum mechanics that have developed since, disrupt this worldview in embracing the idea that different, and even



conflicting, viewpoints are of equal value. The quantum world consists of simultaneous possibilities which in the Newtonian world are for ever separate and distinct.

Briefly, Einstein's special theory of relativity (1905) theorizes that measurements are relative to their frames of reference, so that a measuring instrument changes depending on its motion. A clock on a speeding rocket runs more slowly than a clock on earth, including a human clock. If one of two twins went on a fast round-trip into outer space, for example, she would be younger than her sister when she came back home, because all her 'clocks' - heartbeat, bloodflow, brainwaves, etc. - would slow down during the journey, from the point of view of the woman on the ground. An accelerating body also increases in mass for an earthbound observer, though from the reference frame of the speeding body, earth also appears to be growing heavier. Einstein's famous equation describing this process,  $E=mc^2$ , suggests that mass or matter contains energy, while energy has mass. This idea radically alters the notion of matter in classical physics, creating a newly energized and dynamic version of the solid stuff basic to classical and common sense notions of reality. Seen in relation to the energy it contains, matter ceases to be distinct and absolute; matter itself becomes relative.

A similar transformation brings time and space, previously seen as separate and absolute, into relativistic relation. Einstein terms their relative relation a space-time continuum, in which time becomes a fourth dimension, a co-ordinate that joins the three spatial dimensions to form a mathematically definable continuum. The general theory of relativity (1916) extends this enquiry to define the effects of gravitational fields. Gravity curves the space-time continuum and changes the geometry of space and time, so

that space, time and matter are not discrete entities but rather interacting aspects of the curved gravitational field.

Relying on Einstein's vision of interconnected phenomena, observed from involved, unprivileged, always relative frames of reference, quantum theory demonstrated that Newton's laws of motion could not be applied in the subatomic realm. For Newton a particle is either here or there. In that clear, determinate world there can be no ambiguity about its position. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle (1927), however, posits a radical indeterminacy in scientific knowledge by stating that scientists cannot measure accurately both the position and the velocity of subatomic particles. As Strehle summarizes, using light energy to measure position alters the velocity of particles; in measuring velocity, without altering the energy level of the system, one cannot determine position. No improved technology will ever remove this fundamental uncertainty from scientific knowledge, for basic to it is the recognition that the observer changes - disturbs - the system under study.<sup>7</sup> While the mechanistic model of the universe conceived of reality as independent and causal, and the scientist as able to measure its course objectively, Heisenberg's principle recognizes that subatomic reality changes with observation - and, even more radically, is constituted by choices the observer makes from a position of involved uncertainty. Related to this is Niels Bohr's principle of complementarity (1927) which attempts to codify the indeterminacy of the wave-particle duality of light. Since the experiments of Max Planck (1900), quantum theorists have attempted to resolve the paradox that light has a dual nature as both wave and particle. Known as the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory, complementarity sees irreconcilable and mutually exclusive concepts - both particle and wave - as necessary to understand subatomic

reality, which behaves according to both opposite principles. According to Bohr, the interactions between scientists and nature construct a necessarily double or complementary view of subatomic processes. Resolution of the paradox - or restoration of Newtonian clarity - cannot occur.

The physicists' understanding of quantum theory is far from complete. As John Polkinghorne states: "One of its lessons is that science can live with unresolved questions."<sup>8</sup> The mystery yet to be clarified is how quantum entities, which possess the potentiality of position and momentum, to be particle or wave, are actualized in the act of observation. Geoffrey Chew observed that any 'elementary particle' may transmute into virtual particles of other kinds, which in turn may undergo other virtual transmutations. As Chew reads it the implication is that each particle can be thought of as made up of all the others, so that none is 'ultimately fundamental.' Even more surprising is the many-worlds interpretation which proposes that at every act of measurement the universe splits into parallel, disconnected, universes, in each of which one of the possible results of measurement is realized. There is a universe where the electron is here and another universe where it is there. While there is no consensus, as yet, as to why we should favour one interpretation rather than another, the general conception of the change in reality implied by these terms has had radical implications beyond physics. In her book Fiction in the Quantum Universe Susan Strehle notes the impact of the new physics on psychology (where Lacan and others shift the emphasis from material causes of disorder to energetic processes of relation in language), philosophy (where Foucault and others replace absolutist concepts of people and events with relativistic notions of forms of representation and discourse), and literary theory (where Derrida

and others see interpretation not as the penetration of certain truth but as an encounter with the duplicitous undecidability of texts).<sup>9</sup>

To express and address the new reality Strehle argues that postmodern fiction cannot be 'realistic' though neither can it be totally self-reflexive. Reacting against the language of realism and antirealism, she proposes a new aesthetic category for those texts she identifies as responding to the quantum universe:

I propose, instead, to call the new mode of fiction *actualism*. I believe it emerges from a widespread change in the way reality is understood by the culture at large, and I see this shift localized usefully in the new physics . . . I derive the term "actualism" from a distinction Werner Heisenberg makes between the actual and the real. At the subatomic level, he says, reality is not real, but it is active, dynamic, "actual." Actualistic fiction expresses, then, a literary version of the reality constituted by fundamentally new physical theories in the first half of the twentieth century. Departing from the stable material reality underpinning Newtonian science and realistic fiction, actualism abandons and even subverts the narrative conventions of realism. It does so, however, not to replace reality with the purified aesthetics of self-reflexivity, but rather, self-consciously and theoretically, to renew art's readiness for its perennial project: the human interpretation of a nonhuman reality.<sup>10</sup>

Although Strehle confines her analysis to six North American texts<sup>11</sup> her central premise - that actualistic fiction balances attention to questions of art with an engaged meditation on the external, actual world, and is thus misread by an exclusive critical focus on its metafictional qualities - is particularly appropriate to the study of post-colonial literature and intersects in various ways with the concerns of post-colonial critics to contextualize contemporary fiction.<sup>12</sup> Harris and García Márquez can usefully be defined as actualists in that both displace realism in order to think more clearly about what we now understand as real. The principles of relativity, uncertainty and complementarity which underpin their narratives create the necessary perspectives through which the diverse and hybrid post-colonial identity can be recovered.

Part One of this thesis divided the study of relevant contexts into Reality I and Reality II, in an attempt at framing and providing a critical approach to the dialectical nature of the texts studied in Part Two. In the same way as scientists respond to the wave/particle duality of light, and within the limits of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, history and myth can be understood as two different ways of describing the same reality. Consistent with Bohr's principle of complementarity, both perspectives are necessary for a reading of the texts and both are necessarily partial. The logic of complementarity prevails throughout the fictions of Harris and García Márquez and is central to their post-colonial attempt to break stases of oppression. According to Aristotle's laws of logic all statements must be either true or false. This is no longer possible in the quantum world and the collision of cultures in the Americas similarly reminds us of the relativity of all frames of reference. The narratives of Harris and García Márquez explore opposites as facets of the same reality and through relationships of complementarity illuminate the interconnectedness which emerges from the fragmentation of the post-colonial world.

Good and evil, self and other, death and life are particularly unstable concepts whose self-consciously interchangeable, intertextual, metafictional character forces the reader to engage with a world in the process of creation, what Harris calls "the unfinished genesis of the imagination."<sup>13</sup> Cien años de soledad is in this way a creation myth still in the process of creation, as each reading and re-reading reverses the conclusion that "todo lo escrito en ellos era irrepetible desde siempre y para siempre." (p.448) Escaping the criticism García Márquez levelled at his earlier work as "libros que acaban en la última página,"<sup>14</sup> Cien años

deliberately ironizes its own sense of an ending and looks forward, like The Four Banks of the River of Space, to "the burden and mystery"<sup>15</sup> of a new day. This is achieved through the progress encapsulated in the spiritual journey, in which reality is actualized as a dialogue between good and evil, self and other, death and life.

In his story 'Un señor muy viejo con unas alas enormes' García Márquez ridicules the binary logic of Father Gonzaga for whom there is always a clear distinction between good and evil, angel or devil. When Father Nicanor arrives in Macondo with similar ideas he is told firmly by its people that "durante muchos años habían estado sin cura, arreglando los negocios del alma directamente con Dios, y habían perdido la malicia del pecado mortal." (p.135) Resembling more the Hindu figure of Shiva, in whose cosmic dance lies the capacity both to create and to destroy, the seeds of violence and destruction are always uncertain in the fictions of Harris and García Márquez and intimately bound with the desire to create and to nurture. Both writers often locate such violence and destruction in the patriarchal structures of society. The murder of Santiago Nasar in Crónica de una muerte anunciada is "el horrible compromiso"<sup>16</sup> which, according to the codes of machismo, must be carried out by the Vicario brothers if they are to protect their sister's honour. In The Four Banks Harris parallels the task of the artist with that of women within patriarchal society:

. . . I had inherited all her misgivings about the codes of a male, aggressive society which nevertheless she had to bear in celebration and art and ritual, to translate, to puncture, to transform by subtle degrees into her own state. (p.92)

Like Alicia in The Four Banks, Harris and García Márquez attempt to puncture the fixity of patriarchal codes, in which there is always a victor and a victim, by exposing the cycles of violence which brutalize even the purest instinct for justice. It is just such a

process which transforms the most sensitive and idealistic of Úrsula's sons into the infamous Colonel Aureliano Buendía. As General Moncada says to him:

. . . de tanto odiar a los militares, de tanto combatirlos, de tanto pensar en ellos, has terminado por ser igual a ellos. (p.208)

From the early figure of Poseidon in Palace of the Peacock Harris has been particularly keen to stress the danger of defining reality and identity only through opposition. Like Aureliano, Poseidon continues to define himself in terms of the enemy, the oppressor, and thereby becomes locked within a stasis of rejection which establishes an identity only in negative terms. In The Infinite Rehearsal Harris refers to "the mystery of deprivations through which I must pass" but recognises the temptation to reinforce a status as victim:

*I confess to a reluctance to pass. Such self-righteous deprivation, such pride seduces me, fastens upon me, as if it were the seed of purity, the seed of God. (P.30)*

Both Harris and García Márquez write from the position of the colonized, the marginalized, the disadvantaged, as Robin Redbreast Glass says in the 'note' to The Infinite Rehearsal:

. . . we share one thing in common, namely, an approach to the ruling concepts of civilization from the other side, from the ruled or apparently eclipsed side in humanity. (p.vii)

With the legacy of colonial exploitation always present, and sharing a commitment to political change, both writers nevertheless avoid translating the concepts of good and evil simply in terms of the colonized and the colonizer. A logic of complementarity, in which opposites are always facets of the same reality, renders such historical divisions variously interchangeable, thus enabling revisionary interpretations of the Conquest and of colonialism, as explored in Chapter 6. Harris and García Márquez apply the same perspective to their analyses of contemporary political stasis,<sup>17</sup>

revising ideological structures which continue to demonize the 'enemy' and emphasizing the same dialogical principle which deconstructs their respective fictions. As Harris says:

The biases of the past crack a little. We see through them. We gain a vision of possibilities, of capacities. Thus it is that the fiction *learns*, as it were, to consume its own biases . . .<sup>18</sup>

This process of self-revision takes place in the absence of the privileged and absolute frame of reference associated with traditional authorship. In place of detachment and omniscience, Harris and García Márquez choose positions of involved uncertainty in which concepts of self and other are again treated as complementary, rather than opposite, to each other. The separation of text and author is immediately broken with the appearance of W.H. and Gabriel in their various fictions. Gabriel appears with the entire Grupo de Barranquilla, along with his wife, Mercedes, as the friends of Aureliano Babilonia in Cien años. He appears again with Alvaro Cepeda Samudio in La increíble y triste historia . . . as a travelling salesman; though the artist, who is shot as he goes his own way, is also a thinly disguised portrait of the death of the author.<sup>19</sup> W.H. is a character in The Infinite Rehearsal, the fictional autobiography of Robin Redbreast Glass, who then complains in his 'note' that W.H. has signed his own name to the work. Authors are as much creations of their fictions as the other way around. As Harris states in Carnival:

Soon I was to perceive in the complex loves and sorrows of Masters' life that I was as much a character (or character-mask) in Carnival as he was. Indeed in a real and unreal sense he and other character-masks were the joint authors of Carnival and I was their creation. They drew me to surrender myself to them. (p.31)

In this dynamic exchange of subjectivities, the reader is also reminded of his/her role in creating the fiction. As Harris goes on to say in The Infinite Rehearsal:



Remember me as I remember you. Become a character in my book. Fiction is real when authors become unreal. Fiction reveals its truths, its genuine truths that bear on the reality of persons, the reality of the world, when fiction fictionalizes authors and characters alike. (p.48)

García Márquez similarly engages the reader in the fictional play of the text. Where the authorial voice is deliberately unstable, perspective is always uncertain, as in the opening of

Crónica de una muerte anunciada:

Muchos coincidían en el recuerdo de que era una mañana radiante con una brisa de mar que llegaba a través de los patanales, como era de pensar que los fuera en un buen febrero de aquella época. Pero la mayoría estaba de acuerdo en que era un tiempo fúnebre, con un cielo turbio y bajo y un denso olor de aguas dormidas, y que en el instante de la desgracia estaba cayendo una llovizna menuda como la que había visto Santiago Nasar en el bosque del sueño.<sup>20</sup>

The discrepancies in Melquiades' text also alert the reader to the unreliability of narration. The first words that Aureliano

Babilonia deciphers form the epigraph to the manuscript:

El primero de la estirpe está amarrado en un árbol y al último se lo están comiendo las hormigas. (p.446)

But these words do not appear as epigraph to the novel Cien años de soledad, thus undermining the whole framework in which we have been reading. The Four Banks is similarly an 'edited'<sup>21</sup> version of Anselm's manuscript and reminds the reader of its multiple and relative sources:

A page fluttered, turned in the fire-music and I read, as page intertwined itself with page, the hand of another nameless writer - (p.136)

The palimpsestic nature of Harris' fiction is also true of Cien años and helps to explain why Melquiades' version is inevitably partial. As Aureliano begins to translate Melquiades' text there is a change in tone and perspective which distances our response to the material:

. . . encontró el instante de su propia concepción entre los alacranes y las mariposas amarillas de un baño crepuscular, donde un menestral saciaba su lujuria con una mujer que se le entregaba por rebeldía. (p.447)

The union of Meme and Mauricio Babilonia, joyfully relayed earlier in the novel, is now stripped of all romance as it appears in the written text. This may be a comment on the documentation of oral by written traditions, or on the changes made through the act of translation, but it is significant that this version, having erased the previous version, now attempts to erase itself.

This is achieved through the final union of self and other which, as the image of the mirror reveals, is both an integration and an eclipse of self. Reading and action coalesce as Aureliano is described as deciphering the moment he is living "como si se estuviera viendo en un espejo hablado." (p.447) Like Robin Redbreast Glass in The Infinite Rehearsal. Aureliano is "mirroring and mirrored by transformative relics of memory." (p.43) But as Jean-Pierre Durix points out in his reading of The Infinite Rehearsal,<sup>22</sup> a glass can also mesmerize the character and lead to sterile fascination. In the same way, Macondo is described as "la ciudad de los espejos (o los espejismos)" (p.448) in its moment of demise. As Aureliano discovers how to translate Melquiades' manuscripts, how to find self in the accumulated fictions of Latin America, so the reader is forced out of the fictionality of Macondo into a renewed awareness of the actuality of the external world.

The voice that closes Cien años cannot claim authorial control, however, and remains one of many complementary perspectives through which different versions of the text can be produced. Resembling the tired voice of the old Catalanian who "perdió su maravilloso sentido de la irrealidad" and who also tried to convince others that "la memoria no tenía caminos de regreso," (p.434) the partiality of the closing statement lies in its perception of death as a finality. Like the concepts of good and evil, self and other, death and life are always indeterminate, interchangeable states in the fictions of

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Harris and García Márquez. Melquiades' tribe, we are told, "había sido borrada de la faz de la tierra por haber sobrepasado los límites del conocimiento humano" (p.94) and their constant reappearance throughout the novel thus also suggests the Buendías' capacity for renewal. Characters are not only indeterminate in this way, but also intertextual, vanishing in one text only to reappear in another, like Eréndira in La increíble y triste historia . . . and da Silva in Heartland. Harris visualizes this process as the river of the living and the river of the dead in The Four Banks of the River of Space:

The flute sings of an ancient riverbed one hundred fathoms deep, far below the Potaro River that runs to the Waterfall. Two rivers then. The visible Potaro runs to the Waterfall. The invisible stream of the river of the dead runs far below, far under our knees. The flute tells of the passage of the drowned into the river of the dead. The flute tells that the river of the dead and the river of the living are one quantum stream possessed of four banks. (p.44)

Life and death are presented as facets of the same reality and as Canaima instructs Anselm:

It's time the living entered into a true discourse with the reformatory disguises of the dead everywhere amongst them. (p.10)

This is the process which takes place in Cien años and like Melquiades, who "venía del mundo donde todavía los hombres podían dormir y recordar" (p.104), Anselm must become the 'living dreamer' and learn to see through the complementary perspectives of the quantum stream.

Combining the imagery of carnival with quantum physics, Harris declares that "the sound of its stream may never be heard or visualized except when we clothe ourselves with the mask" (p.44) thus reiterating his previous definition of wholeness as "a third dimension in which every mask suffers the kinship of exchange."<sup>23</sup> But the principles of relativity, uncertainty and complementarity which underpin such a conception of wholeness make it almost

impossible for the reader to visualize. The sustained complexity of the imagery, and the recourse to alternative media ("The flute sings of an ancient riverbed . . . The flute tells of the passage of the drowned . . .") reveal Harris' struggle with the inadequacy of language to articulate and explore such a reality. Physicists encountered the same problem in trying to describe the quantum process. As Heisenberg commented:

Here we have at first no simple guide for correlating the mathematical symbols with concepts of ordinary language; and the only thing we know from the start is the fact that our common concepts cannot be applied to the structure of the atoms. <sup>24</sup>

In the same way as physicists rely on mathematical formula to chart the more paradoxical features of quantum reality, so Harris includes scientific diagrams to help the reader visualize the novel's journey through quantum space. One diagram shows how space curves the four banks of the river to form the rungs of a ladder that the reader will climb:

One cannot tame the voices of the flute, voices of such uncanny lightness yet miracle of being that they are able to tilt the two rivers, the visible and the invisible rivers, into diagrammatic discourse; and in so doing to create the four banks of the river of space into a ladder upon which the curved music of the flute ascends. Those banks are dislodged upwards into rungs in the ladder and into stepping stones into original space. (p.44)

Through such "diagrammatic discourse" Harris attempts to convey to the reader the complexities and possibilities of the space-time continuum, in which all journeys are relative and the past, present and future dynamically interchangeable:

He danced again away from me into the mid-twentieth century, vanished up the hill but returned as upon a curve in intricate space. (p.7)

Gary Zukav's description of the four-dimensional world is in this way equally applicable to Harris' 'canvas of the imagination' in The Four Banks:

If we could view our reality in a four-dimensional way, we would see that everything that now seems to unfold before us with the passing of time, already exists *in toto*, painted, as it were, on the fabric of space-time. We would see all, the past, the present, and the future with one glance.<sup>25</sup>

This is also, of course, the challenge posed by Melquiádes' manuscripts. As already mentioned in Chapter 6, Melquiádes had not written events in the order of man's conventional time "sino que concentró un siglo de episodios cotidianos, de modo que todos coexistieran en un instante." (p.446) Recognising the impossibility of ever expressing this 'insoluble paradox' García Márquez responds with characteristic humour:

La había redactado en sánscrito, que era su lengua materna, y había cifrado los versos pares con la clave privada del emperador Augusto, y los impares con claves militares lacedemonias. (p.446)

If we could unravel such a labyrinth (as does Aureliano Babilonia) then we would perceive the quantum moment as described by Zukav, and as explored by Harris. As it is, Melquiádes' elaborate device reminds us, at a crucial point in the novel, that the unfolding of events as we have perceived them so far, as uncertain and indeterminate as they may have been, are confined still by our limited three-dimensional perspective and are thus only an approximation, a translation, of actuality.

Within these limits, however, Cien años succeeds in displacing realistic notions of time and space in ways Strehle identifies as typical of actualistic fiction:

Actualistic time does not tick regularly at the beat of a universal clock but speeds and slows as it encounters the durational field of the characters' perceptions . . . In the same way they deregulate time, actualistic novels also energize space.<sup>26</sup>

It is precisely this mechanism which creates the startling interaction of events when Aureliano Babilonia wanders through the old town.<sup>27</sup> As Aureliano reconstructs the past in his imagination the disused telephone suddenly becomes the medium through which past

and present are connected and he is able to speak directly with the anguished voice that history had left behind. This energizing of the 'old town' is typical of the way in which García Márquez relativizes space. In El amor en los tiempos del cólera the balloon ride over the old city of Cartagena has a similar function. As García Márquez says in an interview with Raymond L. Williams:

. . . just when I have them convinced that this is Cartagena, then I take them through an abandoned Cartagena. It's a doubling of the city. Let's say it's the same city in two distinct periods, two different temporal spaces.<sup>29</sup>

The mixing, or overlaying, of distinct periods and spaces into the one hundred years of Cien años is central to its post-colonial critique, what Harris calls "a displacement of time-frames to break a one-track commitment to history."<sup>29</sup> In this relative space-time continuum the 'durational field of the characters' perceptions' reaches back into the period of Discovery and Conquest as well as forward to the end of neo-colonialism. But in the same way as the period of La Violencia becomes La mala hora and the events of The Four Banks the "long Day of the twentieth century" (p.49) so Cien años de soledad is also the single instant of Melquíades' manuscripts.

It is through this quantum perspective, which is simultaneously focused and panoramic, that Harris and García Márquez ground their fictions in specific locations and at the same time create an archetypal quality which universalizes the spiritual journey and reinforces the interconnectedness of reality. Similar to the way Geoffrey Chew suggests that each subatomic particle can be thought of as made up of all the others, so the characters in these fictions exist as plural and partial aspects of a larger collective identity. In The Four Banks the interconnections between characters, and the idea that reality is produced out of such interconnection, is made explicit:

But his appearance and abrupt disappearance made me uneasy. It did not yet occur to me that he was a ghost I had sculpted into existence by spying into the materiality of Penelope's silent song . . . (p.20)

Anselm and Penelope are particularly aware of this mutual interdependency:

Penelope was smiling. She shared the material substance of my thoughts even as I penetrated hers. (p.23)

In Cien años it is through the power of memory that characters are able to interconnect in this way. The continued reappearance of Melquíades, and the way in which he is recognised by successive generations of the Buendías, counteracts the old Catalanian's fear that "la memoria no tenía caminos de regreso" (p.434):

Aureliano Segundo lo reconoció de inmediato, porque aquel recuerdo hereditario se había transmitido de generación en generación, y había llegado a él desde la memoria de su abuelo. (p.231)

. . . vio contra la reverberación de la ventana al anciano lúgubre con el sombrero de alas de cuervo como la materialización de un recuerdo que estaba en su memoria desde mucho antes de nacer. (p.391)

Through this collective memory, which recovers oral as well as written traditions, myth as well as history, the Buendías are able to achieve a special form of 'shared solitude' which reconnects them to the various fragments of their own consciousness. It is significant that Úrsula, who is from the beginning the embodiment of female strength and endurance, and whose recollections dominate the telling of the story, enters completely into a world of collective consciousness in her old age:

Tanto habló de la familia, que los niños aprendieron a organizarle visitas imaginarias con seres que no sólo habían muerto desde hacía mucho tiempo, sino que habían existido en épocas distintas. Sentada en la cama con el pelo cubierto de ceniza y la cara tapada con un pañuelo rojo, Úrsula era feliz en medio de la parentela irreal que los niños describían sin omisión de detalles, como si de verdad la hubieran conocido. Úrsula conversaba con sus antepasados sobre acontecimientos anteriores a su propia existencia, gozaba con las noticias que le daban y lloraba con ellos por muertos mucho más recientes que los mismos contertulios. (pp.363-364)



This closely resembles the "theatre of interchangeable masks" (p.161) which closes The Four Banks, both in its sense of play and its intuition of psychic wholeness. Úrsula's intense distress, as well as joy, reveals how she 'suffers the kinship of exchange' in her final integration into a larger collective whole. It is through this 'theatre' that the children, Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano Babilonia, also learn of their own past, in an oral preview of Melquíades' written text.

Theatrical play is important throughout The Carnival Trilogy as a means through which partial identities are rehearsed and recovered. In the Preface to The Four Banks Harris talks explicitly about "an eruption of eclipsed Memories *within the person* into a visualization of cross-cultural bodies that may share, participate in their expression and meaning." (p.xiv) Like Úrsula in Cien años, Penelope, Ross and Anselm all experience this eruption of memory as a means to ultimate re-integration. The fossil pre-Columbian King/ King of ancient Greece that Penelope pulls up from the river of space, for example, is her final recognition of eclipsed memory:

One hand was tense and drawn, the other relaxed, so relaxed it seemed to weigh in its spirit the link of a broken chain. Penelope's inner Dream-courage had made it possible for her to retrace her steps and to confront a spectre that had dominated her life. She was free. A numinous starlit freedom that travellers may find at the heart of a desert. (p.160)

For Harris, this sense of interconnection and re-integration is possible because of a 'quantum immediacy' which takes us into a field of associations. As he writes in 'The Absent Presence:'

That table comes from a tree, the tree comes from a forest, the forest is the lungs of the globe, and the lungs of the globe breathe on the stars . . . a quantum physicist would describe 'Quantum Immediacy' by saying that parts of ourselves are embedded everywhere - in the rock, in the tree, in the star, in the river, in the earth, everywhere. Those parts are very frail. But they are enduring.<sup>30</sup>

As this thesis has tried to argue, the spiritual journeys which take place in the fictions of Harris and García Márquez are attempts to

explore these hidden, repressed areas of consciousness which are often eclipsed by a single perspective, a 'one-sided conquistadorial realism' but illuminated as once again present, active, dynamic, by the multivalent perspectives of the post-colonial writer and critic. For the critic, too, must learn to read through the 'quantum quetzalcoatl mathematics' that enable Harris and García Márquez to see through centuries of exploitation and oppression and to create a form of literature that will begin to respond to the marvellous reality of the Americas.

NOTES

Chapter 7) COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE  
NATURE OF PSYCHIC WHOLENESS

1. Harris, The Four Banks. p.86.
2. Harris, 'The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination,' p.17.
3. Carnival, p.49.
4. See eg. Susan Strehle: Fiction in the Quantum Universe (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p.220.
5. This is a broad and complex field and I am indebted to the following texts for my summarized version:  
Bohr: Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958)  
Powers: Philosophy and the New Physics (London: Methuen, 1982)  
Zukav: The Dancing Wu Li Masters (London: Rider, 1990 [1979])  
Strehle: Fiction in the Quantum Universe  
Polkinghorne, 'The Quantum World' in Physics, Philosophy and Theology, eds. Russell, Stoeger and Coyne (Vatican, 1988), pp.333-341.
6. Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge. p.24.
7. Strehle's summary, p.12
8. Polkinghorne, 'The Quantum World,' p.336.
9. Strehle, pp.13-14.
10. *ibid.* pp.6-7.
11. Pynchon, Gravity's Rainbow; Coover, The Public Burning; Gaddis, JR; Barth, Letters; Atwood, Cat's Eye; Barthelme, Paradise.
12. See Tiffin article already referred to: 'Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History.'
13. A phrase used on numerous occasions, see specifically 'The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination' JCL.
14. Quoted in Chapter 1 (b) from El olor de la guayaba. p.82.
15. The Four Banks. p.161.
16. García Márquez: Crónica de una muerte anunciada (Barcelona: Mondadori, 1993 [1981]), p.61.
17. See eg. García Márquez, 'The Future of Colombia' in Granta. 31 (Spring, 1990), 85-95, on the need for the Colombian government to disentangle itself from U.S. ideological intervention and to dialogue with the country's drug cartels; and Harris commenting on

the "self-righteous deprivation" of Eastern Europe in 'Interview with Wilson Harris, 1990' by Alan Riach in The Radical Imagination, pp.33-65, (p.38).

18. Harris: 'Judgement and Dream' in The Radical Imagination, pp.17-31, (p.25).

19. I refer here to Roland Barthes' challenge of authorial control over the text in 'The Death of the Author' in Image, Music, Text, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), pp.142-148.

20. Crónica, p.12.

21. See Preface in The Four Banks, p.xi.

22. Jean-Pierre Durix: 'The Palimpsest of Fiction: *The Infinite Rehearsal*' in Wilson Harris: The Uncompromising Imagination, pp.210-220, (p.213).

23. Carnival, p.49.

The transformative power of the 'mask' could further be explored here in relation to Lévi-Strauss. Speaking of Lévi-Strauss, David Murray comments: "His claim that masks are not what they are, but what they transform, points us to one of the overall stratagems in his work . . . the idea of masks in endless transformations, which have no actual fixed point or resting place and are themselves by definition an absence, a nothing in themselves, a covering, but not of anything which, if revealed, would explain them - this points away from coherence or a totalisable project." Forked Tongues: Speech Writing and Representation in North American Indian Texts (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p.121.

24. Heisenberg: Physics and Philosophy (London: Allen and Unwin, 1963), p.145.

25. Zukav: The Dancing Wu Li Masters, p.172.

26. Fiction in the Quantum Universe, p.229.

27. Cien años, p.147.

28. Raymond L. Williams: 'The Visual Arts, the Poetization of Space and Writing: An Interview with Gabriel García Márquez,' p.138.

29. The Four Banks, p.59.

30. Harris: 'The Absent Presence: The Caribbean, Central and South America' in The Radical Imagination, pp.81-92, (p.81).

Conclusion: CARNIVAL: A TIME FOR CELEBRATION

But the metaphor of physics continues to remind us that *all* readings are partial. Like quantum reality, the text changes with observation and is itself constituted by choices the observer makes from a position of involved uncertainty. I have chosen a deliberately comparative and interdisciplinary approach to the study of fiction by Wilson Harris and Gabriel García Márquez, emphasizing parallel themes and strategies in their narratives and the shared contexts within which each is writing. Overlapping references to aspects of history, anthropology, psychology and physics have been incorporated to reveal the concerns (my concerns) of the text and to illuminate the larger quest (which is also my quest) for freedom and wholeness. Like the mask, a text can be described as not what it is but what it transforms, a construct which takes us into a field of associations, but a nothing in itself, a meaningful self-deception. Harris and García Márquez make us constantly aware of this. As Bréndira says to Ulises in La increíble y triste historia . . .:

Lo que más me gusta de ti . . . es la seriedad con que inventas disparates.'

Through a series of carnivalesque play, an anti-serious undercutting of their own ideals, both writers emphasize the game which is our quest to understand reality and the need to laugh at our own inadequacies. In his essay 'Carnavalesco y tiempo cíclico en *Cien años de soledad*'<sup>2</sup> Roberto Paoli identifies this as an anarchic but also a cathartic process in which the Buendias laugh at themselves as well as at authority, and in which the macabre and grotesque serve as a release from the tyranny of intellectualism.

Mark McWatt similarly refers to the "chaos of deconstruction"<sup>3</sup> which liberates the play of humour in Harris' texts, emphasizing the partiality of all meaning or judgement. Harris' references to the "unemployed soul" and the "literate imagination" in The Infinite Rehearsal reveal him satirizing his own favourite phrases, in the same way as García Márquez constantly repeats epithets until they become absurd.<sup>4</sup>

As well as subverting the text from within, comedy and humour also extend, and provide another perspective upon, the concerns of the narrative as identified in this study. As Penelope reminds Anselm:

Not so! I am joking. You know that, Anselm, don't you? Seriously joking or is it joking seriously? Creation's a curious and a serious comedy, and divine comedy (as I see it) is more genuinely disturbing than tragedy.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the brutal legacy of exploitation and oppression, the 'History' of Chapter One, Harris and García Márquez refuse to succumb to tragedy and seek, instead, to explore the regenerative potential of the cross-cultural imagination. Though these narrative journeys emerge out of an experience of fragmentation and dislocation, the 'solitude' which must be nurtured before a process of renewal can begin, I have argued in this thesis that a concept of 'shared solitude' emerges as both the process and the culmination of such cross-culturalism. Though indicative still of dialectical tension, of the 'serious comedy' as Harris puts it, this 'shared solitude' celebrates the creative potential of the hybridized community, suggesting a capacity for renewal that radically decentres cultural theory to illuminate the play at the margin as a paradigm for re-integration.

Able to entertain and inspire the reader, both writers use comedy as a metaphor for creativity, revealing in the genesis of comedy<sup>6</sup> a capacity for spiritual hope and renewal. In his Amerindian

tale 'The Laughter of the Vapishanas,' Harris follows Vapishana as she travels to the source of laughter, to "an original extremity . . . at the heart of antithesis,"<sup>7</sup> which will save her tribe from extinction. In the closing words of his Nobel address García Márquez expresses a similar hope for the future:

. . . donde de veras sea cierto el amor y sea posible la felicidad, y donde las estirpes condenadas a cien años de soledad tengan por fin y para siempre una segunda oportunidad sobre la tierra.<sup>8</sup>

Like the Buendías, Harris and García Márquez 'lack the tragic perspective' and the vision they present in their fictions is one in which the world is not doomed.

NOTES

Conclusion: CARNIVAL: A TIME FOR CELEBRATION

1. La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada. p.111.
2. Roberto Paoli: 'Carnavalesco y tiempo cíclico en *Cien años de soledad*' in Revista Iberoamericana: Homenaje a Gabriel García Márquez. 50, no.126 (1984), 979-997.
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